the weekly
Standard

JULY 28, 2003 $3.95

DENNIS MILLER COMES OUT
ERIC PFEIFFER

The Phony Scandal

Fred Barnes: what really happened
William Kristol: Bush suckers the Democrats

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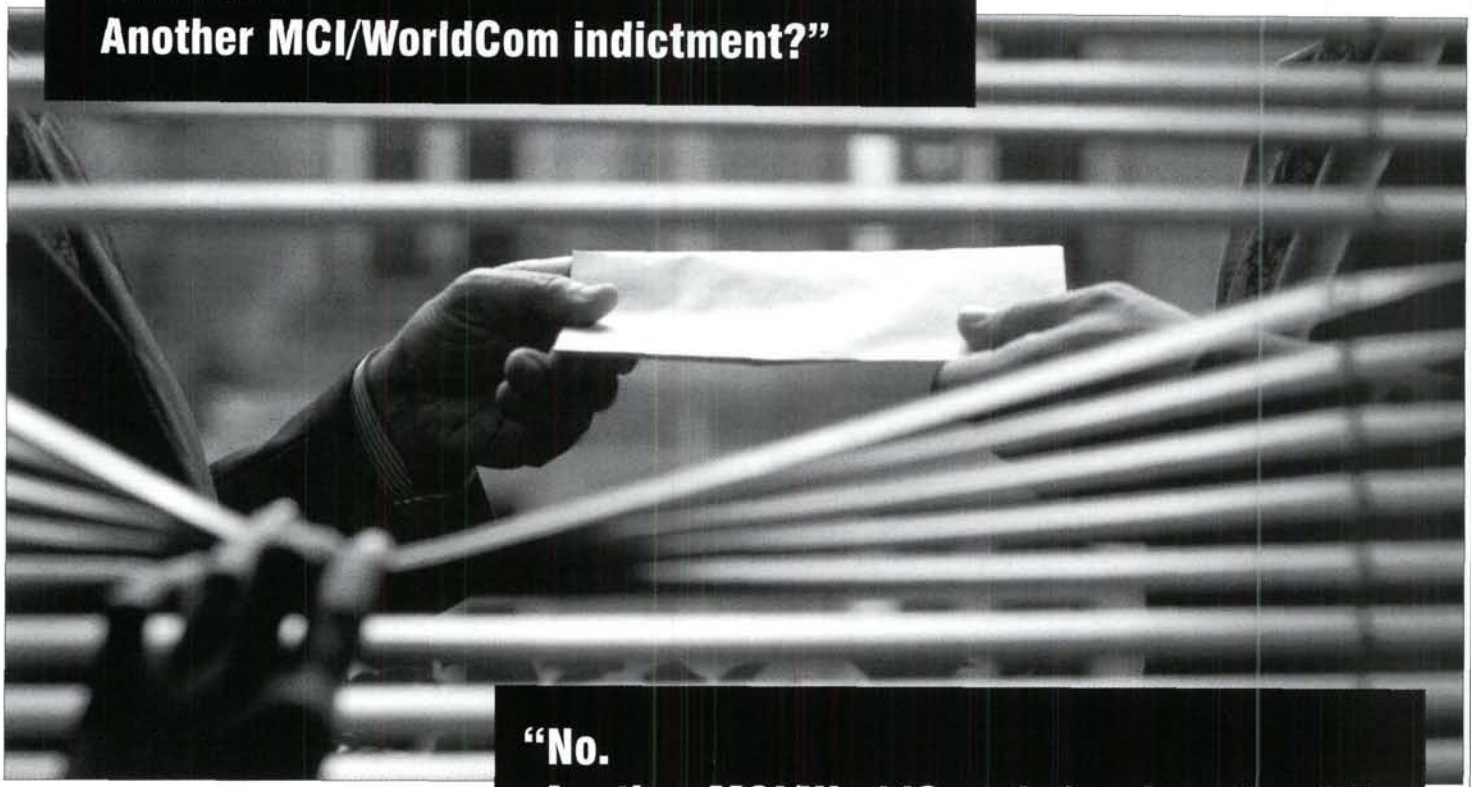
**"What is it?
Another MCI/WorldCom indictment?"**



**"No.
Another MCI/WorldCom federal contract."**

MCI/WorldCom committed the biggest corporate fraud in American history. But the government has not suspended MCI/WorldCom from new federal contracts.

Their fraud lost billions in investor money – roughly three times more than Enron. Then the federal government gave them $772 million in contracts.

Their fraud caused $3 billion in losses to their own employees' pension accounts. Now the federal government is their number one customer.

On June 3rd, newly appointed MCI/WorldCom auditors – KPMG – found that "because of inherent limitations in internal control, errors or fraud may nevertheless occur and not be detected."[1] In a report issued June 9th, bankruptcy court examiner and former U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh found that MCI/WorldCom's fraud was due to a "virtual complete breakdown of proper corporate governance principles."[2]

Not surprisingly, the General Services Administration (GSA) Inspector General recommended GSA initiate proceedings to suspend MCI/WorldCom from new federal contracts.

Unfortunately, six weeks after the Inspector General's recommendation, the government has not acted to suspend MCI/WorldCom.

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Urge the GSA to suspend MCI/WorldCom from federal contracts now... *before* the taxpayers become this company's next victims.

[1] Exhibit 99.1, WorldCom Form 8-K, filed with SEC, June 3, 2003. [2] "WorldCom's Ebbers knew of 'gimmickry'," Bloomberg Newswire 6/9/2003.

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The Literary Life

Cynthia Cotts, "Press Clips" columnist for the *Village Voice*, reports that there's been a "quiet revolution" at *Bookforum*, the small but ultra-chic quarterly spinoff of *Artforum*, the large and venerable quarterly review: Former editor Andrew Hultkrans is out, and Eric Banks is in. THE SCRAPBOOK, a medium-sized weekly feature whose job description does not include any form of the word chic, is unfamiliar with either gentleman—and left to its own devices would consequently be unable to guess what this "quiet revolution" might entail.

But never fear. Cotts has clued us in. Hultkrans, according to one apparently knowledgeable fellow she quotes, had "more of a pop sensibility and an unnecessary preoccupation with first-time fiction, which was not appropriate for a magazine of this stature." Banks, on the other hand, will bring "more intellectual heft and clout."

And what, exactly, are the 37-year-old Banks's qualifications for such highbrow makeover work? Cotts recounts that Banks "switched early on from graduate studies in anthropology and linguistics to freelance editing for university presses and magazines like *Men's Journal* and *Rolling Stone*. Aside from a brief stint at *Vogue*, he has worked since 1995 at *Artforum*, where he honed his skills as a book review editor. He buys ties from Paul Smith and Bergdorf Men's, and is fond of pastels."

That would explain the "pink-and-chocolate head shots of Italo Calvino" on the cover of the current issue, we figure. But where's the evidence that Banks is constructing, as Cotts oxymoronically describes it, "a showcase for the kind of rigorous and elegant writing produced and consumed mostly by academics"?

One hint: *Bookforum*'s current issue also features "a bristling dispatch from Richard Howard, who confirms he is gay, but not, as Alain Robbe-Grillet called him in a previous issue, the kind of homosexual who finds 'nothing more disgusting than women.'"

This hint sent THE SCRAPBOOK scurrying through *Bookforum*'s convenient online archives. Where we find, in the Spring 2003 edition, Robbe-Grillet, the celebrated French novelist and filmmaker, being interviewed thusly:

Q: Richard Howard, your translator, has said that he thought this new novel was an anthology of all your previous work, with an interlude for f—ing a teenage girl.

ROBBE-GRILLET: Well, Howard is a homosexual. And to him there's nothing more disgusting than women. He even announced twenty years ago that he was going to refuse to translate any books in which there's any sexual activity with women. To dedicate himself entirely to homosexual literature. Even in his translation of Baudelaire, when it gets too sexual, he cuts off Baudelaire's balls. Anyway, the statement is stupid. Because since *The Voyeur* was written, there have been thirteen-year-old girls getting f—ed in my books.

Now there's rigor and elegance for you. But we can't help wondering: How come *Bookforum* didn't think to ask Robbe-Grillet where he buys his ties? ♦

Cusack Dodges Draft

They had 5,000 "block captains," a website praised by Arianna Huffington, mentions in the *New York Times*, and a former DNC oppo guy running the show—and yet (you can almost hear the American people sighing), the movement to draft John Cusack for president has been abandoned. This urgent news THE SCRAPBOOK learned from last week's *New York Observer*, which quoted Dan Carol, the former DNC guy who dreamed up the Cusack campaign as a promotional gag three years ago to attract young lefty voters.

Carol was in a sour mood about the remaining candidates. "People are looking for a perfect candidate," he told the *Observer*, "and everyone who's out there seems like a midget." So true: Compared with Cusack (or "JC" as fans call him), guys like Dean and Lieberman and Kerry and Gephardt do seem smaller than life.

THE SCRAPBOOK is certainly disappointed. We've had high hopes for Cusack, our favorite loony left actor, ever since he became tight with Sidney Blumenthal. Cusack's work was becoming so political, a run for office just seemed inevitable. Take that movie *Max*, in which Cusack played an imaginary art dealer who dotes on the volatile young painter Adolf Hitler. "You are a hard man to like, Hitler," the Cusack character says.

But that was as nothing compared with the off-screen insights while Cusack was promoting the film. You see, he told *Beliefnet*, it was Hitler who discovered that the future was going to be a fusion of art and politics and that "whoever controls images and symbols has the power."

Cusack said the Taliban also understood the fusion of art and politics: "Look at the Taliban destroying those Buddhist statues." So did Osama bin Laden: "The reason bin Laden staggered the planes going into the towers

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was so that every camera would be focused on the second tower as the plane hit. It was not only the murder, . . . but the iconography of murder." And so did George Bush! "It's all theater. We all know it. It's just disgusting. One day Trent Lott says what he says about the South and lo and behold the next day President Bush is reading to multicolored children at the White House. It's just pure theater; it's kitsch."

Yeah, this would have been the perfect candidate. Back to the drawing board guys. ♦

Lots of Blondes, but Few Jokes

A few weeks back, we reprinted on this page a *USA Today* e-mail soliciting blonde Harvard lawyers on Capitol Hill to critique MGM Studios' *Legally Blonde 2: Red, White & Blonde*, in which the bubbly Reese Witherspoon lawyer comes to stodgy Washington. So what's it like being Capitol Barbie with pink pumps and an amicus brief? Very tough, according to the fair-haired Ivy Leaguers, whose angsty remarks appeared earlier this month in the Gannett national daily.

"Sharing sorority secrets and pooper-scoopers will not move a town where influential individuals participate in a subculture of spite and intolerance," snarls Annette Lang, a Justice Department attorney. "I struggle with the notion that you can overcome the negative forces of self-interest and entitlement with Elle's style." Lore Unt of the Federal Trade Commission was "happy to see a 'girl power' movie aimed at teens that applauds success at law, Harvard and the legislative process." Elle (the Witherspoon character) succeeds by "working hard and adjusting to standards, but never sacrificing her identity."

Wiley Rein & Fielding LLP attorney Stephanie Denton agrees. "Just because Elle has a penchant for pink and purse-worthy pooches doesn't mean she can't have ideals and briefcase-worthy legislation. Elle reminds us people aren't always what they seem." Denton proves it by inserting an unlikely but wholly welcome blonde joke of her own in the middle of all the girl-power sermons. "What do smart blondes and UFOs have in common?" she asks. "You hear about them all the time, but you've never seen one." She said it. ♦

Strike Four, He's Out

While criticizing President Bush's handling of intelligence, Senator Bob Graham last week raised eyebrows about his own. At the NAACP's annual convention, a reporter asked Graham if he thought Bush had told a "lie" about Iraq's attempts to buy uranium in Africa. "I would not use the three-letter word," said Graham. "I would use the five-letter word: deceit." ♦

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Casual

Free Baghdad Bob

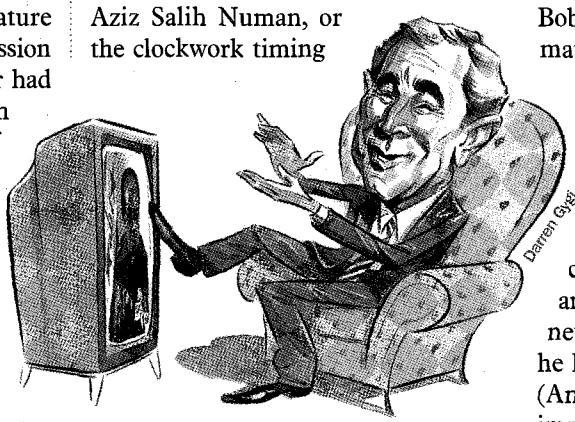
At the risk of blowing my cover as a debonair man of refinement, I have a confession: I like booty. Not the lust-generating fleshy musculature advertised by J.Lo or Beyoncé Knowles. That would be cheap booty. I like the kind that's free.

Often in this business, prospective subjects assume your journalistic integrity is for sale. In my case, it is. Last year, for instance, a reader who works in the Kentucky legislature mailed me an unsolicited commission as a Kentucky colonel. I've never had much use for Kentucky, other than consuming copious amounts of its fried chicken. Now, however, if you or any of your good-for-nothing friends slander the bluegrass state, you will do so over the dead body of Colonel Matt Labash.

The best little Christmas-in-July freebie I've received in some time came the other day from a British firm calling itself the Baghdad Broadcasting Corporation. It was a simple videocassette, featuring the rapidly-fading-from-memory mug of Baghdad Bob, the former Iraqi information minister who looks like F. Murray Abraham, but who wasn't nearly as good an actor. From the video box—decked in titillating typeset warning "Uncensored!" and "Watching this video may cause SHOCK AND AWE"—you might think you were in for the Iraqi equivalent of the "Girls Gone Wild" video series, with Baghdad Bob doing Jell-O shots out of some Mukhabarat officer's navel.

In actuality, it featured a reflective treatment of "the very best of the Iraqi Information Minister." For Baghdad Bob, aka Mohammed Saeed Al-Sahaf, gave us something more valuable than sex or mature language. He delivered that scarcest of commodities during times of war: He gave us the gift of laughter. Some call him the Rodney Dangerfield of Saddam's regime. He was unfairly omitted from the Iraqi "Most Wanted" deck of cards (unable even to ride the pine as a joker). But Baghdad Bob—or just plain "Bob" to his friends—was far and away the war's breakout comic talent.

Sure, he might not have had the manic energy of King of Diamonds Aziz Salih Numan, or the clockwork timing of Queen of Clubs Kamal Mustafa Abdullah. But Bob picked a persona and, as we theater people say, he committed. The mark of a gifted propagandist is one who tells enough small truths to sell the big lie. But with only 21 days from the start of the war to the fall of Baghdad, Bob had no time for protocol.



Consequently his offerings ranged from the implausible ("Our initial assessment is that they will all die") to the scatalogical ("Their rear is blocked"). He forwent the Churchillian in favor of the vaudevillian: "They are not only wrong, they are criminals and stupid. This is a fact, you can check it." So entertaining was Baghdad Bob, that even George W. Bush admitted interrupting meetings to catch his routine, saying, "He's my man, he was great." Bob, for his part, called Bush an "insane little dwarf."

In both the video and the scores of Baghdad Bob fan sites that are advertised on it, we mainline the wisdom of the guy historians will likely come to regard as a one-man Bartlett's. Only Bob could say, without giggling, "I triple guarantee you, there are no American soldiers in Baghdad." Or "They are nowhere near the airport . . . . they cannot read a compass . . . they are retarded." Or "We defeated them yesterday. God willing, I will provide you with more information." Or "The burden is on the people who think he didn't have weapons of mass destruction to tell the world where they are." Sorry—that last one came from Ari Fleischer. Sometimes I get my propagandists confused.

In the weeks after the war, when Bob disappeared, all sorts of disinformation made the rounds about the information minister. The worst was that Bob had hanged himself, which came as a surprise. Sure, you could see him squirting the tears of a clown. But we fans knew Bob, and he was no suicide. Recently, he resurfaced, giving an interview to an Arabic television network. Still unable to get respect, he had some trouble getting arrested (Americans released him almost immediately after taking him into custody). Life on the lam, it turns out, is no simple task. It's difficult to come by money, friends, and especially Just For Men hair rinse, as evidenced by Bob's overnight transformation from shoe-polish black to silvery ash.

But it's easy to forget that the other side has war heroes too. And Bob is the Iraqis'. By the time American tanks rolled into Baghdad, Saddam had already fled for a new life, presumably selling discount rugs in Dearborn, and Uday had packed away his disco balls and dark-light posters. But Bob stayed at his post and lied like a man. As a Kentucky colonel, I know what kind of courage that entails. And as one military man to another, I salute a guy with enough grace under fire to utter, "We will welcome them with bullets and shoes."

Matt Labash

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RPS AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AMENDMENTS TO THE SENATE ENERGY BILL

COULD HIT AMERICANS WHERE IT'LL HURT THE MOST.

Right in the family budget. The Senate should reject costly and unnecessary amendments to S.14 — the Energy Policy Act of 2003. Mandates on greenhouse gas emissions and Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) for electricity will lead to higher energy prices for consumers.

Instead of these **one-size-fits-all federal mandates** that will harm our economy, the Senate should stay with a proven strategy of promoting renewable energy through incentives and funding for research and development allowing states to develop programs to meet their individual needs. And, the Senate should support voluntary programs to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. America doesn't need RPS and greenhouse gas emissions mandates, and Americans don't need higher energy costs.

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Correspondence

Hillary of Beans

P.J. O'Rourke's review of Hillary Clinton's book ("Hillary's History," July 7/July 14) is brilliant and hilarious. But nothing could be funnier than the unintended irony in her tale of the episode that was the "genesis of her worldview." She claims she volunteered to help "gently shake the snow off the branches of the surrounding trees so that they wouldn't break under the weight."

Here in Minnesota, we know that you never do any such thing to trees, no matter how snow-laden, because however gentle you try to be, the chances of damaging the tree are much greater than if you just leave it alone. What we have, then, is a perfect metaphor—the story of the Clintons' life, really. Trees as a species have survived millions of years without Hillary's help. But she knows better. She has to come along and save the poor helpless things that can't speak for themselves. Never mind that she's doing more harm than good. The important thing is that it makes Hillary feel good, it looks noble to others, and when she compares herself with all those who did not volunteer to do this brave work, it supports her ever-present knowledge of her own overwhelming moral superiority.

John Beal
North Mankato, MN

P.J. O'Rourke's review of Hillary Clinton's "memoirs" is characteristically acute.

Proof that this book was not written by anyone possessed of either a modicum of literary style or political sophistication comes on page 320, when the determined reader learns in a discussion of the decision to grant Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams a visa that "there was no doubt that Adams had been somehow involved in IRA activity."

"Somehow involved" is a nice touch. Who knew Clinton was such a humorist?

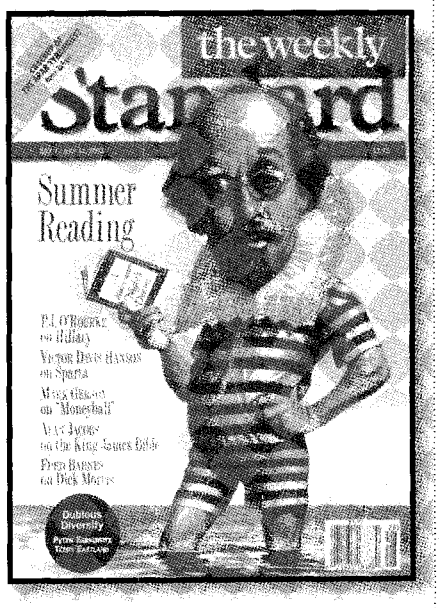
Alex Massie
Washington, DC

The Rules of the Game

Frederick Kagan's "An Army of Lots More Than One" (July 7/July 14) was timely for the unit I support. I am a reserve Command Judge Advocate for a large contingent of soldiers deployed in Iraq. One of the commanders requested I teach his soldiers the rules of engagement that apply on patrol in Baghdad.

The soldiers are outstanding warriors who fought from the Kuwaiti border all the way to Baghdad. Now these warriors are being told, by people like me, that the rules have changed. When they go out on dangerous missions they must act simultaneously as warriors and police officers. The rules that determine when they can use deadly force change from moment to moment.

As police officers, their ability to use deadly force is limited to self-defense and defense of others. As soldiers, they can engage the enemy immediately. The trick



is knowing which Iraqis are the enemy and which Iraqis need to be protected.

When soldiers hear this double standard, they are bewildered. Our servicemen have been put in a dangerous position of having two sets of rules with no clear guidelines on when one applies over the other.

Kagan's solution—more ground troops—would go a long way to make the situation better. Give us more military police to guard the peaceful locals and coalition base camps, and let the soldiers fight.

The soldiers deserve all the resources our country can muster to support them.

J.M. Sawyers
Baghdad, Iraq

The Arab Crackup

As a longtime student and admirer of the Arab philosopher and historian Ibn Khaldun, I found Amir Taheri's "The Crackup of the Arab Tyrannies?" (July 7/July 14) most enlightening. The political crisis of the Arab world is responsible for most major military conflicts over the past quarter of the century, as well as for terrorist campaigns worldwide. Solving the Arab societies' political quagmires should be the ultimate aim of all military and diplomatic efforts undertaken by the United States and its allies, now and in the future.

Florian Pantazi
Brasov, Romania

Syria lost the Yom Kippur or Ramadan War in 1973, not the Six Day War as stated in "The Crackup of the Arab Tyrannies?"

I look forward to reading more of Taheri's articles in the future.

Ariel Beery
New York, NY

Papist Scarecrows

A couple of quibbles with Justin Torres's otherwise excellent article "The Papist Menace?" (June 23). First, Al Smith ran for president in 1928, not 1920. Second, and more important, Torres should have addressed the evidence that the anti-Catholicism of the 1960 election was actually, in part at least, a straw man, invented by the Kennedy camp itself during the primaries.

Bob Hunt
Hillsborough, NJ

• • •

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SHOULD YOUR TAX DOLLARS BE USED TO CREATE A PALESTINIAN ARAB TERRORIST STATE?

IS THIS WHERE YOU WANT YOUR TAX DOLLARS GOING?

The Bush administration is already sending over $200 million in taxpayers' dollars to the Palestinian Arabs each year. Now that figure may be increased to as much as $1 billion, according to *The New York Times*. And there will be a special allocation of $300-million to train and equip the Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces–who themselves have engaged in terrorism.

THE U.S. IS BUILDING A NEW TERRORIST STATE

President Bush has vowed to put an end to terrorist states–but he is promoting a "Road Map" plan to create a Palestinian Arab state that would inevitably be a terrorist state.

We know it will be a terrorist state because for the past ten years, the Palestinian Authority has been promoting terrorism against Israel. Sometimes the PA itself has directly ordered and financed terrorist attacks. Sometimes the PA has encouraged, tolerated, and sheltered other groups that carried out terrorism, such as Fatah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad.

There have been periods when terrorism was more frequent; there have been periods when it was less frequent. But the Palestinian Arabs' terrorist war against Israel has never stopped.

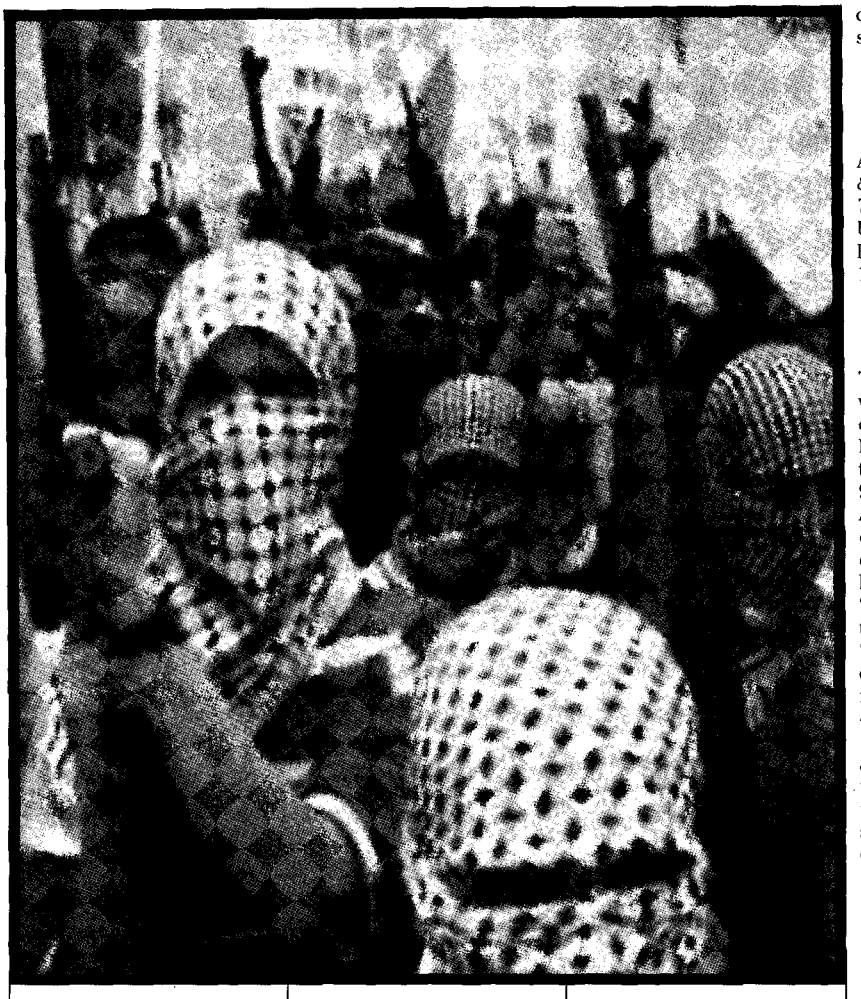
To this day, in violation of the Bush Road Map, the PA refuses to outlaw terrorist groups, refuses to confiscate their tens of thousand of weapons, and refuses to shut down their training camps.

The PA continues to incite hatred and murder of Israelis in their school books, television, radio, newspapers, speeches, and religious sermons by PA-appointed clerics. The PA teaches its people that Israel does not even have the right to exist.

And a PA state would be even more dangerous. It would be able to import weapons. It would have its own army, navy, and air force. It would have sovereign borders to shield terrorists from arrest.

The present PA regime tortures political dissidents, suppresses women, and abuses Jewish holy sites. A sovereign PA state would be a brutal Muslim dictatorship.

The present PA regime has close ties to anti-American regimes like Iran, Syria, and Libya. A sovereign PA state would be a bastion of anti-American hatred and form close alliances with America's enemies.



71% OF AMERICANS OPPOSE CREATING A PALESTINIAN ARAB STATE

A recent poll by McLaughlin & Associates found that 71% of Americans oppose creating a Palestinian Arab state; only 13% favor it.

76% OF AMERICANS OPPOSE AID TO THE PALESTINIAN ARABS

A recent poll by McLaughlin & Associates found that 76% of Americans oppose U.S. financial aid to the Palestinian Arabs; only 11.5% favor it.

THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY IS ANTI-AMERICAN

The Palestinian Authority was Saddam Hussein's closest ally. Thousands of Palestinian Arabs danced in the streets to celebrate the 9/11 terrorist attacks on America. PA officials have engaged in vicious attacks on America's leaders–they have called President Bush "a lunatic" and "the head of the snake" and Colin Powell "a neo-Nazi." And the PA continues to shelter the terrorists who have murdered 42 American citizens since 1993–including Sheikh Abd al-Aziz Awda, who was indicted last February by the U.S. government yet is still walking free in PA-controlled Gaza.

THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY PERSECUTES CHRISTIANS

Christian Arabs living in PA-controlled territories have been brutally persecuted. U.S. courts have even granted some of them asylum on the grounds that they would be persecuted if they returned to PA areas. Bethlehem, which once had a Christian majority, now has a Muslim majority–many Christians have left due to PA-tolerated harassment by Muslims.

PHOTO: PROJECTONESOUL.COM

TELL PRESIDENT BUSH AND CONGRESS: NO AMERICAN TAXPAYERS' DOLLARS FOR THE TERRORIST PA REGIME!

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THE "ROAD MAP"

Will it lead to peace or to devastating war?

The United States, the United Nations, the European Union, and Russia – labeled, collectively, the "Quartet" – have devised a plan called the "Road Map." The Road Map attempts to bring about peace in Israel/Palestine over a three-year period. At the end of that period, the emergence of a Palestinian state is envisioned, a state that is expected to live alongside of Israel in "peace and security."

What are the facts?

Unfriendly promoters. Of the four promoters of the Road Map, only one – the United States – can be considered friendly to and supportive of Israel. In the European Union, the centuries-old virus of anti-Semitism has again reared its ugly head, now disguised as anti-Israelism or anti-Zionism. Russia has always been hostile to Israel and has been an enthusiastic supplier of weapons to the enemies of the Jewish State since its creation. The UN seems to take up most of its time in condemnation of Israel and in discriminating against it, to such an extent that Israel is the only country that is ineligible to become a member of the Security Council.

It is likely, therefore, that the interests of three of the four designers of the Road Map are not in promoting peace, but, hypocritically, rather in the destruction of Israel or at least in its not surviving as a Jewish State.

Palestinian State: a new and unwarranted idea. The idea that the so-called "Palestinians" should have their own state has now been accepted as a just and desirable goal by most of the world. Sad to say, our own president has bought into this concept. One must regretfully assume that he did so mostly in order to appease our "Arab friends," who are outraged about our waging war against Iraq. It buys into the myth that the Israeli-Arab dispute is at the heart of the endemic conflicts in the area and that forcing Israel to "take risks for peace" is a means of assuaging Arab humiliation. But should the safety of Israel, America's only true and reliable ally in that part of the world, be jeopardized or sacrificed on the illusive altar of "Arab friendship?" A Palestinian state did not occur to anybody (even to the "Palestinians" themselves), when the Ottomans were the rulers in the land, when Great Britain had the Palestine Mandate, or when Jordan was in occupation of the "West Bank" for nineteen years after Israel's War of Independence in 1948. The concept of a Palestinian state did not arise until after the Six-Day War of 1967, in which Israel was victorious, wrested the "West Bank" from Jordan, the Gaza Strip from Egypt, and has been in administration of those territories since.

> "The solution: Total autonomy for Israel's Arab minority, within Israel, the Jewish State – a reward to which so many minorities in the world have aspired, but which has been granted to only a very few."

Israel is a tiny country, a sliver on the Mediterranean coast. It is even now in a strategically almost impossible position. Without the "depth" of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and without full control of the Jordan Valley it would be utterly indefensible. Israeli generals know that and American generals know that. And, of course, Arab generals know that also. But Israel needs to be able to defend itself, because all of its immediate neighbors – Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon – no matter what they may be saying for public consumption, have only one primary military and foreign policy objective and that is to destroy Israel, to drive the hated Jews into the sea, and to finish what they call the "Zionist Enterprise" once and for all. To believe that the "Palestinians," once they had their own state, would be peaceful neighbors of a truncated and mortally vulnerable Israel or that the other Arabs states and Iran would turn from wolves to lambs is to either engage in wishful thinking or quite deliberately be co-conspirators in the eventual destruction of the Jewish State.

The Road Map will inevitably go the way that other previous "peace plans" have gone – all of which demanded "sacrifices for peace" from Israel, yielding large chunks of territory for only empty words from the Arabs. But even if Israel, tired from decades of bloodletting and under unbearable pressure from the "international community," would acquiesce to such a suicidal path, the "Palestinians" would not allow it to happen. Their hatred of the Jews and the inculcation of their children to die as martyrs are such that they would be unable and unwilling to stop the terror that they have visited upon the Holy Land. Another bloody war, rather than peace, is the likely outcome of the Road Map. What is the "solution" that so far has eluded everybody? It is what Israel has always been willing to grant: total autonomy for its Arab minority within Israel, the Jewish State. It is a reward to which so many minorities in the world have aspired, but which has been granted to only a very few.

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the weekly Standard

Bush Suckers the Democrats

Karl Rove is a genius. No—Rove probably gets more credit than he deserves for political smarts, and the president gets too little, so let's rephrase that: George W. Bush is a genius.

Almost two weeks ago, the president ordered his White House staff to bollix up its explanation of that now-infamous 16-word "uranium from Africa" sentence in his State of the Union address. As instructed, and with the rhetorical ear and political touch for which they have become justly renowned, assorted senior administration officials, named and unnamed, proceeded to unleash all manner of contradictory statements. The West Wing stood by the president's claim. Or it didn't. Or the relevant intelligence reports had come from Britain and were faulty. Or hadn't and weren't. Smelling blood, just as they'd been meant to, first the media—and then the Democratic party—dove into the resulting "scandal" head first and fully clothed.

Belatedly, but sometime soon, the divers are going to figure out that they've been lured into a great big ocean—with no way back to shore. Because the more one learns about this Niger brouhaha that White House spokesmen have worked so hard to generate, the less substance there seems to be in it. As we say, George W. Bush is a genius.

In its October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate, the CIA concluded that Saddam Hussein remained "intent on acquiring" nuclear weapons; that actual development of an Iraqi nuclear weapon would be but several months to a year away if Saddam could acquire sufficient fissile material; and that Baghdad had, in fact, already begun "vigorously trying to procure" such stuff, uranium ore and yellowcake, either of which would speed Saddam along.

This then-secret CIA report was filed one month *after* the British government had announced a similar judgment in public. Subsequently, a variety of American officials echoed this claim in public statements between October and January, in the context of repeated expressions of concern about Iraq's "continuing, and in some areas expanding," chemical, biological, nuclear, and missile programs, as the CIA put it in its October estimate.

On January 28, the president said in his State of the Union address that "the British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." Perhaps he should have said "the British government believes" rather than "has learned." But this statement was unremarkable at the time, and remains unremarkable today. And, contrary to the implications of George Tenet's disingenuous press release of July 11, the president said nothing that the Central Intelligence Agency had retracted or controverted in the months between the distribution of their October estimate and the State of the Union address.

It now turns out the CIA had its doubts—though they were less than definitive. It also turns out the British are sticking by their claim. And it remains the case, most important, that the African uranium business, whatever the truth of it, was never more than a single piece of the otherwise voluminous evidence driving allied concern over Saddam and weapons of mass destruction. How important were those "significant quantities of uranium from Africa"? The White House now acknowledges, in retrospect, that the matter didn't merit mention in the State of the Union.

There's your "scandal."

American journalism's frenzy over the thing—the hyperbolic, rush-to-judgment, believe-the-worst character of the coverage—has been plenty bad enough. But the Democratic party has been even worse. Here, for example, is what unsuspecting Internet visitors learn from the Democratic National Committee's website: There has been "a year-long campaign of deception involving a bogus intelligence report on Iraq's nuclear program." And who has directed this deception, for reasons so terrible, apparently, that they cannot be identified? DNC chairman Terry McAuliffe has cracked the conspiracy: "This may be the first time in recent history that a president knowingly misled the American people during the State of the Union address," he says. And "this was not a mistake. It was no oversight and it was no error."

What it was instead, according to former governor

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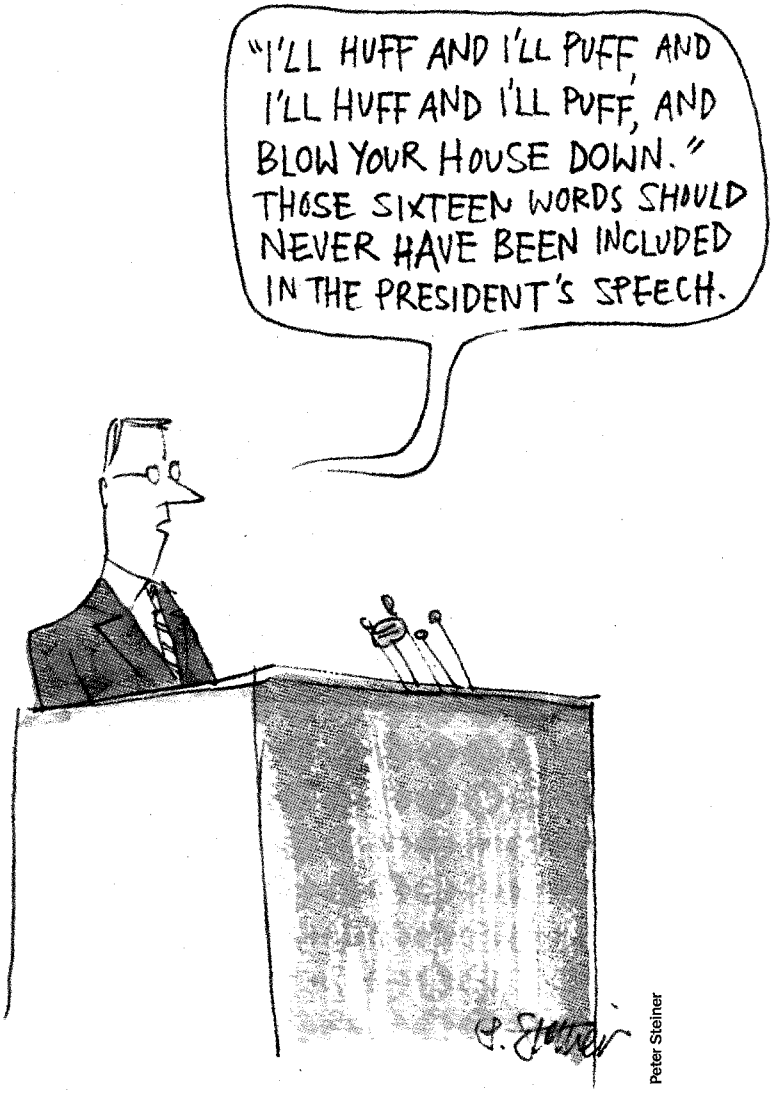

Peter Steiner

Howard Dean of Vermont, currently the Democratic party's leading candidate to replace President Bush in the White House, was a "pattern of distorted intelligence" that raises a real question whether the American people can confidently "retain their trust in their government"—or whether the United States "can retain its credibility as a moral force in the world."

And the answer to these questions, adds Sen. Ted Kennedy, not to put too fine a point on it, is: no. "It's a disgrace," in the Sage of Hyannisport's expert assessment, that "the case for war seems to have been based on shoddy intelligence, hyped intelligence, and even false intelligence." There being no other conceivable case for war, so far as Kennedy is concerned, the Bush administration has therefore "undermined America's prestige and credibility in the world."

Of course, were all this true—had Bush really sent American soldiers into combat against what he knew to be an imaginary, fabricated threat—then the nation would be ripe for yet another presidential impeachment drama, maybe. Not *maybe*, says Florida senator Bob Graham, one of Howard Dean's many rivals in next year's Democratic primaries: "My opinion is, if the standard that was set by the House of Representatives relative to Bill Clinton is the new standard for impeachment, then this clearly comes within that standard."

Not that anyone in the Democratic party is prepared to defend Saddam's deposed regime, mind you. Or dares to propose that Iraq is worse off now that Saddam is gone. Or that America is worse off now that Saddam is gone. Or that the Middle East is worse off now that Saddam is gone. (Though Gov. Dean is agnostic on all counts.) No: The Democrats' problem is not that Bush judged Saddam a present danger. Their problem isn't even that Bush based this judgment on American intelligence estimates to that effect. How could it be, since Bill Clinton and Al Gore made the very same judgment, based explicitly on the very same intelligence estimates?

George W. Bush's one great and unforgivable sin, it seems, was to have *acted* on the judgment that Saddam Hussein was a present danger—acted, as Clinton and Gore repeatedly threatened but failed to do, the way a serious president must. At his moment of decision, the American people supported Bush. They support him still. And the fact of that support—as the Democrats' hysterical attack on a 16-word sentence in the State of the Union suggests—is driving one of our two major political parties . . . stark, raving mad.

God knows the Bush administration is not beyond criticism for either its prewar planning or its execution of postwar reconstruction efforts. And it would be a valuable contribution to our politics if such criticism were mounted by the Democratic party—acting as an intelligent, loyal opposition. But it's a free country, and if the Democrats prefer instead to act as a pathologically disgruntled lunatic fringe, then it'll be their problem more than anyone else's.

Certainly the White House won't think it a problem. That muffled sound you hear coming from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is the sound of George W. Bush chuckling at the success of his nefarious scheme. Misunderestimated, once again.

—*William Kristol*

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The Future of Iraq, in Outline

Jerry Bremer, administrator in a hurry.

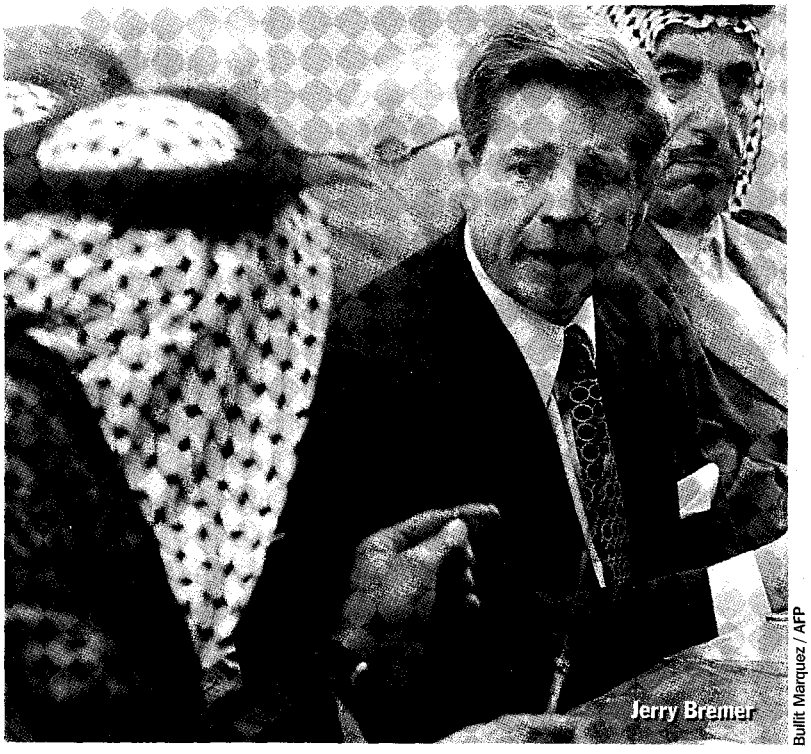
BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Baghdad

SPEND ANY TIME with Jerry Bremer and you'll notice two things. He thinks and speaks in outlines. And he compresses any timetable he's given, often cutting it in half.

So when Bernie Kerik, former New York City police commissioner and current security adviser to the Coalition Provisional Authority, told Bremer he would need four years to "stand up" 70,000 police officers across free Iraq, Bremer had a counterproposal: 18 months.

Bremer, President Bush's envoy to Iraq and the head of the Authority, discussed security—and almost a dozen other topics—in his office on July 17. Wearing tan hiking boots and a navy blue suit, he spoke for nearly an hour with six journalists traveling with Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz. Bremer's office is palatial, literally. It's located in what everyone here calls the "four-headed Saddam palace," so named for the massive sculptures perched atop the building's four towers featuring the deposed dictator in headgear resembling a pith helmet. The decoration is sparse, and the bookshelves that stretch to the 30-foot ceilings are mostly empty, except for a box of bran flakes and several books, including Rudy Giuliani's *Leadership*. The furnishings are just the essentials—an oversized desk at one end and a round table with seven regal, high-backed armchairs at the other, a coat hanger with a handful of ties, a royal blue espresso maker.



Jerry Bremer

Bullit Marquez / AFP

After a brief editorial comment about news reports to the effect that his team lacks a strategy—they're "nonsense"—Bremer shifted to his outline. "We've got to do three things," he began. "We have to establish a sense of security and stability in the country. We have to, secondly, begin the process of economic reform. And we have to move along on transition to a democratic political structure."

Bremer poses questions and answers them. On security: "Where is our problem? Our problem is largely confined to what is called the 'Sunni Triangle' or the 'Sunni heartland.'" He continues: "What is our problem? There are two problems. They are both structural. One is, this is the one part of the country that we didn't fight over. By the time we got north of Baghdad, the two Republican Guard divisions that were stationed there faded away. So, we never conquered that area like we conquered the rest of the country. Secondly, this is the traditional support area for the Baath party. This is where Saddam's tribal base was. This is where a lot of the military industrial complex is located. . . . That's where the problem is. It's not elsewhere. It's there."

The remnants of the regime, Bremer believes, are targeting coalition successes. Naturally, he gives three examples. The American soldier killed at Baghdad University "was killed because they don't want us to have the universities working." The mayor of Haditha and his son were executed because he was cooperating with the coalition. And the bombing at the police academy in Fallujah was the result of progress the coalition has made in establishing an Iraqi police force.

On politics, Bremer argues that the process must have two characteristics. "It has got to be an Iraqi process, a constitution written by the

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Iraqis for the Iraqis. And it has got to be seen as a process which is legitimate in the eyes of the Iraqi people." Bremer has been reluctant to guess publicly how long this process will take. But in answering questions, he suggested that writing a constitution could take less than eight months. That compact time frame will be necessary if Iraq is to hold elections within a year, something Bremer hinted is possible.

Bremer seems well aware of the skeptical coverage his efforts are receiving in the American media. He is eager to dispel myths before they gel into conventional wisdom, but for someone working 18-hour days and to whom the concept of "weekend" is a memory, his critiques are more matter-of-fact than bitter. "I keep reading in the press that we are somehow late or behind schedule," he says of the political transition. "I said when I got here on May 13 that we would have a political council, we then called it, in place by the middle of July. We had it on July 13, basically right on schedule."

Bremer told us that revitalizing the Iraqi economy would be the most difficult challenge his team faces. The destruction comes not from the war—"almost no damage from the war," he says—but from a "comprehensively mismanaged economy over 35 years." The devastation, Bremer contends, picking up his outline where he left off, "goes across the entire economy, and it means two things. Number one, the infrastructure is very fragile because there is almost no redundancy built in, which makes it very susceptible to political sabotage for the time being. And two, it means we are going to have to devote extraordinary amounts of money to rebuilding infrastructure in the next 5 to 10 years, which is going to be extremely expensive."

If a 10-year time frame is realistic for infrastructure investment, the immediate priority of the coalition is evidently to turn over day-to-day governing responsibilities to Iraqis as soon as possible. When I asked one Bremer deputy about his boss's accelerated pace, he responded sarcastically: "You noticed?" Still, officials here bristle at the suggestion that they are preparing to leave anytime soon. "That's not going to happen," says one.

Some members of the new 25-member Governing Council are discouraged that returning the country to Iraqis is not happening faster. Ahmed Chalabi, head of the Iraqi National Congress, has made clear that he wants more Iraqi involvement now, particularly as the coalition continues to assemble security forces throughout the country.

Bremer is realistic—"We do have a security problem," he says—but not discouraged. "When I got to Baghdad eight weeks ago," says Bremer, "the city was burning. It was on fire. There was no traffic in the city, other than coalition vehicles. And I slept with earplugs at night because of the gunfire. This is a remarkably better place in all three aspects." ♦

Miller's Crossing . . .

to the right side of the political street.

BY ERIC PFEIFFER

DENNIS MILLER insists he's not an across-the-board conservative, which may technically be true. Still, there's no doubt America's most sophisticated and most political comedian has been coming out of the conservative closet in a very big way. He hung out with President Bush and campaigned for him earlier this month on a weekend fundraising trip through California. And, on late night talk shows, Miller has applauded President Bush's leadership and cheered the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. Moreover, Miller has lately been pounding the Democratic leadership, the abortion lobby, the French, and big-time lefties like Norman Mailer and Michael Moore. And recently Miller took the final, defining step to becoming a big-time public conservative, by signing up for a regular gig at Fox.

In his first return to weekly television since ending his Emmy award-winning HBO series *Dennis Miller Live* last year, Miller has agreed to provide commentary Friday nights on the *Hannity & Colmes* show. In a recent phone interview from Los Angeles, Miller told me why he got back into television. "There are things that irk me," he said. "I wanted to have a place where I could express my opinions."

The day after his inaugural Fox commentary, Miller traveled with President Bush aboard Air Force One on their way to a reelection fundraiser. "He's a fine man and I'm proud he's my president. I enjoyed spending the day with him." And Miller left little doubt that he'd make time for the president over the next 16 months: "I'd love to. I want this man to be president again. It's a dangerous world, and I can't have guys who are soft on that fact. There are no 'al Kindas.'"

Although Miller served up the red meat to Bush supporters at the fundraiser, he was reportedly booed for joking about West Virginia senator Robert Byrd's former association with the Ku Klux Klan. "I think he's burning the cross at both ends," Miller had riffed. The story gave rise to some public finger-wagging, so I

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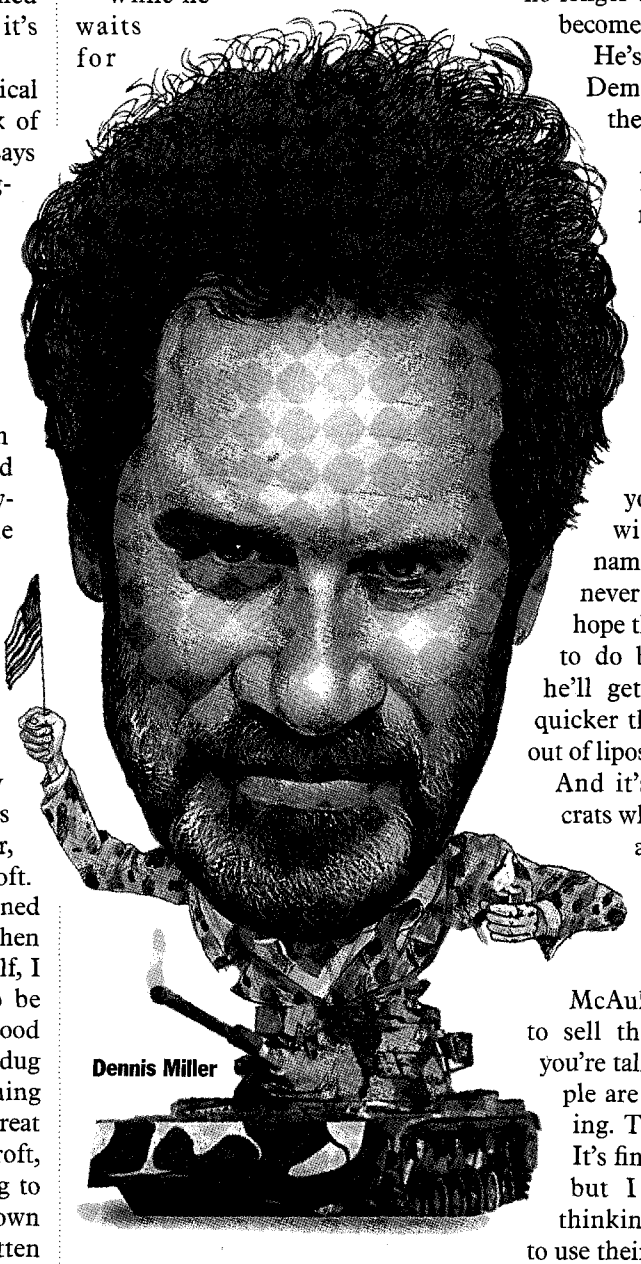
asked him about it. "That pointed out how interesting the coverage is to me. At some point, someone went 'ooh' at the intensity of my remarks. You can call that a 'boo' if you want. Believe me, I was preaching to the choir there. I doubt they were Robert Byrd fans. You know, if there is one place in the world where there are more portraits and buildings named after 'The Leader' than in Iraq, it's West Virginia."

But back to the whole political identity business: "I don't think of myself as a classic conservative," says Miller. "I think of myself as a pragmatist. And these days, pragmatism falls into the conservative camp. We have to depend on ourselves in this country right now because we can't depend on anyone else. We are simultaneously the most loved, hated, feared, and respected nation on this planet. In short, we're Frank Sinatra. And Sinatra didn't become Sinatra playing down for punks outside the Fontainebleau [Hotel]."

September 11 marked the turning point of Miller's voyage to the right, but as far back as 1996 he was referring to himself as a conservative libertarian. Increasingly, Miller couldn't stomach the left's many attempts to demonize politicians like Rudy Giuliani and, later, Attorney General John Ashcroft. "With Giuliani, I was preconditioned to think he was heavy-handed. When actually examining him for myself, I said, 'Wow, New York seems to be running so well.' The guy has a good sense of humor when he talks. I dug him. And then obviously everything was borne out after 9/11 what a great man he is. And with John Ashcroft, the main civil liberty I'm looking to protect is the 'me not getting blown up' one. I don't know if it's written down anywhere in Tom Paine's crib sheets, but that's my big one."

Miller's not shy about military action. Against Syria, he supports it. Also in Iran, where he says regime change will be an "easier overthrow" than in Iraq. Intervention in Liberia he views as a way of bringing stragglers in the international community back on board. "I think we have to send a few mall cops over, quite frankly. Who's the man in charge over there, Chuck Taylor? Didn't he invent Converse All Stars? It can't be that hard. Let's send some guys over from Nike and Puma."

While he waits for freedom to spread through the Middle East, Miller's ready to see democracy in action in his home state of California. "We've got a $38 billion deficit. I look at the California budget, and I see that we're paying to remove tattoos. It's the petri dish for untethered liberalism. I'm telling you, this place is turning into Sweden. Except, at least there the blondes are authentic." Not only does Miller support the effort to recall the governor, Gray Davis, he's already picked out a candidate: Arnold Schwarzenegger. "I would vote for him, and I would work for Arnold in a second. You know, it's no longer the San Andreas Fault. It's become Gray Davis's fault."



Dennis Miller

He's got ammunition for other Democrats as well. Sizing up the party's presidential candidates, he says, "I knew Kerry was going to have to run for president because his features are so chiseled, his actual skull could be on Mt. Rushmore. The guy looks like an Easter Island statue in a power tie. Howard Dean can roll up his sleeves in public all he wants, but as long as you can see that heart tattoo with Neville Chamberlain's name on his right forearm, he's never going to get off the pad. I hope they send Howard Dean out to do battle with Bush because he'll get his ass handed to him quicker than someone who just got out of liposuction surgery."

And it's not just leading Democrats who rile Miller, but the party as well, beginning with DNC chairman Terry McAuliffe: "You know, people are looking to buy a way of life here, and McAuliffe looks like he's trying to sell them a used Z28. I think you're talking about 7 out of 10 people are thinking what I'm thinking. They want to be protected. It's fine to talk about health care, but I think most people are thinking they don't want to have to use their health care to get stitched up after they're blown up in a bomb blast by a nut case. They want the nut case killed before that happens. So, in that case, it becomes preemptive health care. As I get older, it seems unsafe to me to be anything but a conservative." ♦

Illustration by Earl Keleny

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Credit Where Credit Is Due

Republicans should see the Democrats' tax cut, and raise it. BY STEPHEN MOORE AND JEFFREY BELL

EVER SINCE the Bush tax cut passed nine weeks ago, the left has been foaming at the mouth over the supposed injustice done to low-income workers who were left behind with no income tax relief. Of course, anyone who even casually follows these debates knows the reason these workers did not receive an income tax cut: They don't pay any income tax.

According to the nonpartisan Tax Foundation, most of these low-income workers are already almost totally reimbursed for the income and payroll taxes they pay, through the earned income tax credit. Nonetheless, to address the PR problem of some non-income-tax-paying workers receiving no tax relief from the new Bush tax cut, the Senate has passed legislation moving up the "refundability" of the child tax credit, which would have happened under President Bush's 2001 tax cut in 2005.

Here's how it works. For a worker with an income of $20,000 and two kids, if the new child credit is made fully "refundable" (i.e., the worker receives a check for the amount of the child credit above the family's federal income tax liability), the family would receive a $2,883 check from Uncle Sam, based on the combined child and earned income credits. But the total payroll and income tax burden for this family would be only $1,915. Hence, the family receives $968 more in payments than it pays in taxes.

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What's more, the House Ways and Means Committee reports that the total amount of all taxes paid by this $20,000 income family—federal income taxes, payroll taxes, state income taxes, local taxes, and even sales taxes—would be $2,878, which is slightly less than the amount of the "refundable" check the government would be sending this family. This is Tom Daschle's concept of tax fairness.

Here's the bottom line in this debate: The left wants tax cuts for several million people who don't pay *any* federal taxes. All that makes this refundable "tax cut" different from a conventional welfare check is that to qualify for these payments, the parent must work—which is, admittedly, an important difference. Still, the program is more income-redistribution than tax equity, and its ultimate effect will be to take more American families off the income tax rolls entirely. The bottom 50 percent already pay only 5 percent of all federal income taxes. This would tilt the overall tax burden further up the income scale.

The Republicans can avoid an embarrassing unconditional surrender on this issue by using the left's "fairness" rhetoric against them and making the $1,000-per-child credit truly available to all workers. The biggest inequity of the child tax credit is not at the lower end of incomes, but at the income range for middle-income families. The purpose of the child credit is to acknowledge that the larger one's family is, the more one's income should be dedicated to child-rearing expenses, and not intercepted by the tax collector. Many middle-income families will be angry when they discover that because of income caps on the credit (caps the Democrats insisted upon), they won't receive the full $1,000-per-child tax cut. In fact, once families hit an income of $110,000 a year, the child credit begins to phase out. Evidently, liberal Democrats believe these families are rich. But few of these families probably feel affluent. In a high-cost state like New York or California, a $110,000 income is what an electrician married to a schoolteacher might jointly earn—hardly a family basking in the joys of idle wealth.

More outrageous is that the child credit disappears altogether for families making $150,000 or more, no matter how many dependent children are in the home. Why should a low-income family that pays no income tax receive a payment for kids, but not a family that does pay lots of income taxes with an income of just over $150,000? This is the real tax injustice that should be remedied.

Even more important in terms of work and investment incentive (which is what the Bush "stimulus" tax cut is all about), this tax credit phase-out raises marginal tax rates for families earning between $110,000 and $150,000 by about 5 percent. This more than cancels out the income tax rate cuts for families in this income range.

House conservatives should insist that if the child credit is made available to people at the bottom, it should be made available to every American—regardless of income. Phasing out tax credits penalizes families when they work harder to get ahead; such phase-outs are at the heart of what Americans have come to hate about the modern-day income tax. If the Daschle Democrats want to make the tax credit universally available—then so be it. House majority leader Tom DeLay has exactly the right take on this debate: "When Democrats decide to give a $1,000 tax break to everyone and not discriminate against anybody and extend those out, we'll have a bill to make that happen." Now that would strike a real blow for tax fairness. ♦

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Germany Was Not a Piece of Cake

Lessons for de-Baathification.

BY LESLIE S. LEBL

A GERMAN FRIEND born in 1941 once recounted that he had been so hungry as a small child that, left unsupervised in the pantry, he ate an entire jar of mustard. The conversation made a strong impression on me, in part because of his bitterness toward the occupying powers that had presided over such conditions. Certainly, it did not match my view of German reconstruction as fast, easy, and successful from the start. Yet that view seems to be the model against which our performance in Iraq is being measured.

But *was* German reconstruction easy? The historical record shows it was anything but.

German policy was fiercely contested during and after the end of World War II in Washington, with tremendous rifts at the cabinet level between Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr. and Secretary of War Henry Stimson, as recounted most recently in *The Conquerors*, by Michael Beschloss. The fundamental question that split policymakers was the degree to which Germany should be punished for the war. Morgenthau argued that Germany should be dismembered, turned back into an agricultural country, its industry and thus its potential to wage war largely dismantled. Stimson opposed this, arguing that 30 million people would starve. Nor did he see virtue in splitting Germany into pieces. He believed that a disabled and chaotic Germany, which he felt would surely result from such a policy, would keep all of Europe from recovering from the war. This dispute was not fully resolved when the war ended.

Dan McElleney / Bettmann/Corbis

Lucius Clay (center) helping load food for Berlin, 1950

If U.S. policy was unclear in Washington, things were no better on the ground in Germany. A fascinating look at this process comes from *Decision in Germany*, the memoir of Gen. Lucius Clay, the head of the U.S. military government in Germany. Clay argues that Washington did not understand how chaotic the situation in Germany really was in 1945. Clay was indeed in a difficult spot; far from having a clear policy to communicate to both Germans and Americans, he was charged with implementing the relatively punitive directive (JCS-1067) that defined U.S. policy toward Germany. That top-secret directive, by the way, was not made public until October 1945—six months after the German surrender—a situation that would constitute a major public relations disaster were it to happen today.

Security and law-and-order problems were an immediate priority. As Clay describes it, the crime rate was high at the war's end, but all German police had to be vetted. They were disarmed until September 1945, when they were provided with light arms. And, because the Nazis had so corrupted the German justice system, U.S. military-government courts carried out various legal functions for several years in the American sector. Clay recounts a series of steps he took to improve this justice system over time, noting the difficulties of crafting a hybrid for a unique situation.

De-Nazification was highly controversial, both among the occupying forces and in the United States. In the American sector, where it was implemented the most rigorously, German tribunals worked under American supervision. Some 25 percent of the population was judged; some individuals were detained for almost three years before being brought to trial. At one point, Clay defended this process against pressure from a congressional committee calling for its quick termination. Finding the right balance

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that would allow true political reform, yet not punish unduly those who were only nominally Nazi or create large groups of disenfranchised, excluded, and potentially dangerous opponents of the occupying power was no easier then than it is likely to be now in Iraq.

Nor did the United States have a consistent military plan for Germany. Our first concern, after the German surrender, was to send as many troops as possible to the Far East to fight Japan, or to send them home. Certainly the rapid drawdown weakened our hand in dealing with the Soviet Union on the future of Germany.

During the first three years after the war, U.S. officials expended a great deal of effort trying to work together with the other occupying powers (Britain, France, and the Soviet Union). In retrospect, it is easy to say that the Soviets were never going to cooperate constructively with us in Germany. At the time, however, we were committed to working with them. As a result, senior American officials spent long hours in endless quadripartite meetings that produced little of value. To give just one example, in May 1946, Clay's experts presented him with a plan for currency reform that they considered urgent, given the damage done by raging inflation in Germany. We proceeded with currency reform only in June 1948, more than two years later, when we had decided to do so despite Soviet opposition.

But perhaps the clearest indication that the peace was far from "won" in the first two years was how Secretary of State George C. Marshall described the situation in Germany in a radio talk to Americans in April 1947: "The patient is sinking while the doctors deliberate." Only then did we fund the Marshall Plan.

The record in Germany suggests not that we knew what to do and did it efficiently, but that we succeeded only after struggling for some time over the right policy and then how to implement it. Success in Iraq will likely require the same process. ♦

Don't Write Off Hong Kong

Democracy there deserves Washington's support.

BY ELLEN BORK

THIS MONTH, Hong Kong has been swept up in the most dramatic events since its 1997 return to Chinese rule. On July 1, half a million people marched to protest new national security laws that would threaten rights of association, press, and religion. Next, the defection of a leading pro-Beijing politician from the government's camp set off a chain of political events. The enactment of the security legislation was postponed, and last Wednesday night two cabinet-level officials who have been targets of discontent resigned: Regina Ip, the secretary for security, known for her hostility to democracy, and Antony Leung, the financial secretary embroiled in a scandal over his purchase of a Lexus weeks before he raised car taxes.

Still, unless Hong Kong's people continue to press for democracy and the international community takes up their cause, Tung Chee-hwa, the extremely unpopular Beijing-appointed chief executive, will probably survive politically to implement the new laws on subversion, treason, and theft of state secrets. And if that happens, little will remain of this extraordinary moment of opportunity. But whatever the outcome, recent events have destroyed two myths concerning Hong Kong. The first is that Beijing is not deeply involved in its affairs. The second is that its people apathetically accept the undemocratic government imposed on them by Beijing. The collapse of these propositions requires an overhaul of U.S. policy toward Hong Kong. Before that can happen, Washington has to take Hong Kong as seriously as Beijing does.

Beijing behaves as though it has a lot at stake in Hong Kong. Enactment of the national security laws, required by Beijing in Article 23 of the Basic Law it drafted for Hong Kong, was kicked off last year with a directive from Chinese vice premier Qian Qichen. Furthermore, according to a scholar of the Chinese legal system, the content and form of the security proposals indicate they were drafted on the mainland. Chinese officials and state media have also revealed their deep involvement, as they have rejected as interference international calls for a transparent process and other steps toward democracy in Hong Kong.

Beijing sees a link between events in Hong Kong and Communist party control on the mainland, and not without reason. The march on July 1 was the largest political demonstration on Chinese territory since the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989. Concerned about the political impact on the rest of China, Beijing ordered the media and Internet portals not to report the march and censored CNN. Beijing's top leaders held an emergency meeting of the Politburo. Also, since the demonstrations, China has sent mainland officials, including intelligence officers, to assess the situation in Hong Kong. Ominously, on July 14, the *China Daily* denounced the protests as a "vehicle for subverting the political system."

Washington, on the other hand, treats Hong Kong as if it were a discrete matter, virtually unaffected by the mainland. Ever since the 1997 handover, the United States has

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Kin Cheung / Reuters

A June 4, 2003, candlelight vigil in Hong Kong, commemorating the crackdown in Tiananmen Square 14 years earlier

politely ignored China's interference. Even in the face of evidence to the contrary, the United States has insisted that Hong Kong is enjoying the autonomy and freedoms it was promised. American officials stress the integrity of the Hong Kong government and carefully discuss the future of its political system without reference to Beijing. White House and State Department statements on the national security laws and the resulting protests made no mention of Beijing. President Bush did not raise the issue of Hong Kong in his June 1 meeting with newly minted president and Communist party general secretary Hu Jintao at the recent G-8 summit.

Paradoxically, while pretending that China is not central to Hong Kong's affairs, the United States relies entirely on Beijing's blueprint for governing Hong Kong. In 1999, American officials accepted Beijing's meddling in a major ruling by Hong Kong's highest court as unfortunate but consistent with the terms of Hong Kong's governance. More recently, Assistant Secretary of State James A. Kelly gave the impression that future democracy is assured under the Basic Law. Writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, Kelly stated the Basic Law calls for "further steps to enlarge democracy by 2007." Unfortunately, this is incomplete. Expansion of democratic seats in the legislature ends in 2007—when 30 of the total 60 seats will be filled by democratic election. And read the fine print: The annexes to the Basic Law require any plans for changing the composition of the legislature or choosing the chief executive to be approved by the undemocratic legislature and the Beijing-appointed chief executive.

Kelly then counseled that "it will take time and the emergence of common cause among often disparate interest groups if the Hong Kong people are to reach their full potential." This is precisely the line of Hong Kong's pro-Beijing political figures.

Hong Kong's problem will not be solved by a reshuffled government or even the replacement of the embattled Tung Chee-hwa. "People in Hong Kong can see that the problem isn't just with an individual, but with the structure," Yeung Sum, an elected legislator and chairman of the Hong Kong Democratic party, told the *Washington Post*.

U.S. officials should listen to Yeung—and others. Why not replace our current policy, which owes so much to Beijing's vision, with one based on true democracy for Hong Kong? To begin with, the administration should send a bipartisan delegation to hear what Hong Kong's people have to say.

Up to this point, the United States has refused to acknowledge that the recent protests have changed circumstances in Hong Kong in important ways. Hong Kong is a battleground between democracy and dictatorship. Until Washington frees itself from the limits of Beijing's vision for Hong Kong, it will be impossible to deal with the reality of Hong Kong or, for that matter, China. ♦

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A Retirement Plan for Tyrants

Do bloodthirsty dictators really deserve a comfy exile? BY RICHARD W. CARLSON

ONE OF MY PARTNERS as an observer at the South African elections of 1994 was General Olusegun Obasanjo, now president of Nigeria. We traveled around together a bit during those two weeks in May, through Soweto and the migrant labor camps near Johannesburg. We talked a lot. A smart, decent fellow, it seemed to me. Lucky, too. He returned to Nigeria soon after the election, was hit with trumped-up treason charges, and sentenced to hang. But he beat the gallows, was released from prison, and in a few years went on to win election as president, a man with a good reputation in a country with a bad reputation.

Why then, I wonder, would the general, as he did last week, offer asylum to Charles Taylor, the oafish leader of Liberia—a thug and a barbarian, an escapee from a Massachusetts jail who murdered and raped his way across the once benign West African country? Did the State Department ask Obasanjo to do this to get Taylor out of Liberia?

Maybe, because that is the way it has long been done—democracies in the West turn a blind eye to Criminals in Chief and rescue them from the vengeful payback of their citizens. The old school of diplomacy held that asylum and a life of idle luxury were an acceptable means of dealing with murdering dictators. The trouble with this is that the dictators know they have a waiting refuge from punishment. Would that knowledge help you curb your sadistic appetites if you were in charge?

AFP / Corbis

Idi Amin in 1972, with Syria's Assad, Egypt's Sadat, and Libya's Qaddafi

I remember a dozen years ago, when the same Charles Taylor, amused and chuckling, caught Samuel Doe, then the Liberian president, cut off his ears, and made Doe eat one of them as Taylor's men ran the dying Doe around in a wheelbarrow. A Taylor lieutenant, wearing a woman's girdle on his head, danced joyfully, firing his AK-47 skyward as Doe chewed sadly on himself.

Maybe if Taylor accepts Nigeria's offer, he'll step into a trap and be turned over for trial, his own metaphorical ears at risk. But don't count on it. That isn't what's done with genuinely evil men, not if they are despots. Look at Idi Amin. He did to Uganda what Taylor did to Liberia: brought it to its knees and heaped misery on its people. Now he lives happily in Saudi Arabia, under the protection of the royal family, as an act of "Muslim charity."

Amin took over Uganda in 1971 in a bloody military coup against the corrupt President Milton Obote. Amin and Obote had been partners in the economic rape of the country for a number of years. "The Gold Dust Twins," the *Economist* called them, in reference to their ambitious gold and diamond smuggling. As soon as Amin seized power, he ordered death by firing squad for hundreds of soldiers he didn't trust, and then personally participated in the decapitation of dozens of their officers. Beheading was a favorite of Amin, a leader who truly enjoyed getting his hands wet.

He once placed the severed heads of two opponents on a table and dined with them (and forced his wives and friends, their own necks still intact, to join him), berating them for not supporting his presidency. Still, western governments, knowing well of Amin's long army career of rape and torture, fell all over themselves to cheer him on as the new president. There were more than a few clues as to what was to come.

The list of Amin's crimes is scroll-length: He killed two of his wives. One, Kay, he had dismembered, and then ordered her parts sewn back together for display to their children. He kidnapped the distinguished Ugandan chief justice and murdered him. He expelled tens of thousands of Indian merchants and civil servants from the country—where many had lived for generations—and seized their businesses, homes, and possessions, turning them over to his cronies. In vengeance for the successful Israeli raid to free passengers being held hostage at Entebbe airport by Palestinian terrorists, he personal-

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ly ordered the murder of an elderly British passenger, Dora Block, who was at a Kampala hospital when the other passengers were rescued. (Amin hated Jews and once announced he was going to erect a statue of Hitler in Kampala, the capital.) He led a drive against rival tribes and was responsible for the torture and murder of approximately 300,000 innocent Ugandan men, women, and children.

Amin's capacity for evil was limitless, but so was his buffoonery. He was sex-mad and apparently a walking STD. He was illiterate and could hardly sign his own name, but granted himself various titles, including King of Scotland and President for Life, and a Ph.D. Finally, he made the mistake of invading Tanzania. He slaughtered thousands of livestock and thousands of Tanzanians until he was driven out. The furious Tanzanians followed him back into Uganda and he fled the country. After an unhappy stint as a guest of Libya, he was invited to Saudi Arabia by the king and has been living in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah ever since, all expenses paid—including car and driver—though he has millions of his own, looted from the Ugandan treasury.

Amin has been seen in recent years on evening walks, and sometimes he attends Friday prayers in a mosque near his villa. When inquiring European journalists have tried to interview him, he has been whisked away by the government to Mecca, where infidels are not allowed. When asked why he is protected in their country, the Saudi government says it's "Muslim charity." His religious claims (he converted) trump his crimes.

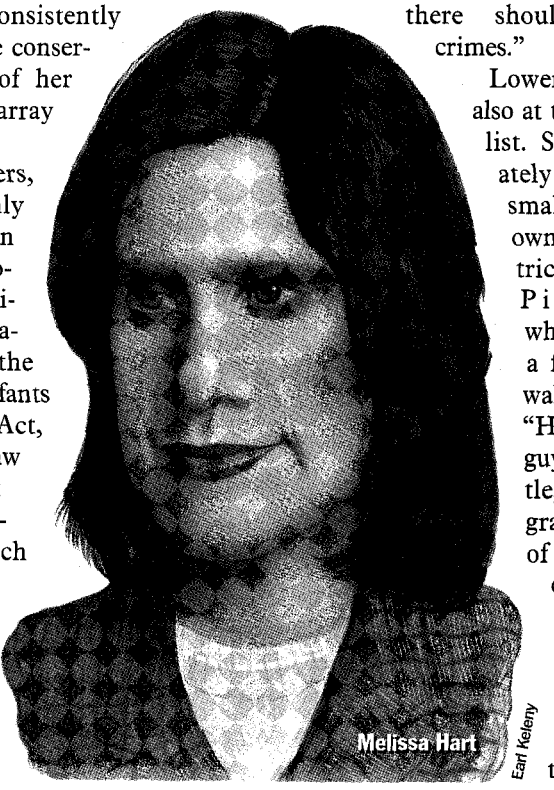
The Bush administration badly wants to do something good in Africa. Okay, how about a commemorative gesture on behalf of those thousands of murdered Ugandans and their ruined country? Why don't we demand that the Saudi royal family act with real decency for a change and turn Idi Amin over to his fellow (surviving) Ugandans for simple justice? ♦

Hart of the GOP

A pro-life congresswoman succeeds in a blue-collar district. BY RACHEL DICARLO

ANYONE WHO THINKS the face of the GOP sisterhood belongs to pro-choice moderates like Maine senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins should take a look at another Republican woman from the Northeast: Melissa Hart. The two-term Pennsylvania congresswoman has a 96 percent rating from the American Conservative Union and consistently votes with the conservative wing of her party on an array of issues.

For starters, she's staunchly pro-life. In 2001 she co-sponsored anti-cloning legislation and the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, signed into law by President Bush last summer, which made killing a baby born alive during a botched abortion a crime. "Congresswoman Hart has been an articulate and vigorous defender of unborn children," says National Right to Life legislative director Douglas Johnson.


Melissa Hart
Earl Kelleny

This spring Hart became the prime sponsor of the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, or "Laci and Conner's Law." The bill, which has passed in the House twice but failed in the Senate, would establish legal consequences if an unborn child is injured or killed as a result of violence against its mother. It's been met with plenty of opposition from NARAL Pro-Choice America, who reject the bill on the grounds that it gives rights to a fetus. "Here it's a matter of a woman who has made a decision to carry her child to term," Hart says. "So there should be two crimes."

Lower taxes are also at the top of her list. She affectionately refers to a small business owner in her district north of Pittsburgh, whom she's met a few times on walking tours. "He's a sparky guy in New Castle, an immigrant, and a lot of his employees are immigrants." On his employees' paychecks he juxtaposes their net pay with the total amount in taxes, Social Security, and Medicare withheld and asks them if they think they and their families benefit enough every week to justify the amount confiscated by the government. "When people become upset about how much money is taken," it's more likely "that we'll have better tax policy," she explains. "This guy is sharp."

Hart says her interest in politics was sparked in family debates around

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the dinner table. "I became kind of a news hound," she says. The granddaughter of Italian immigrants on her mother's side and two coal miner grandfathers, she can relate to a hard day's work. She grew up in blue collar Allegheny County and worked her way through Washington and Jefferson College and the University of Pittsburgh Law School.

At Washington and Jefferson, she was one of the founding members of the College Republicans' Club and started volunteering for campaigns, including the 1982 race of one of her political role models, former Pennsylvania governor Dick Thornburgh. "He stood for his principles . . . during tough economic times, when steel mills were closing and people were unhappy," she says. "He was always honest and forthright."

Before her career in politics took off, Hart practiced law and worked in real estate in west Pennsylvania. In 1990, when she was 28, she ran her first campaign for the state senate against a long-term Democratic delegate who was considered unbeatable. "With no name recognition and no money," Hart recalls walking door to door with Senator Rick Santorum, who was then running for the House, shaking thousands of hands. Both won.

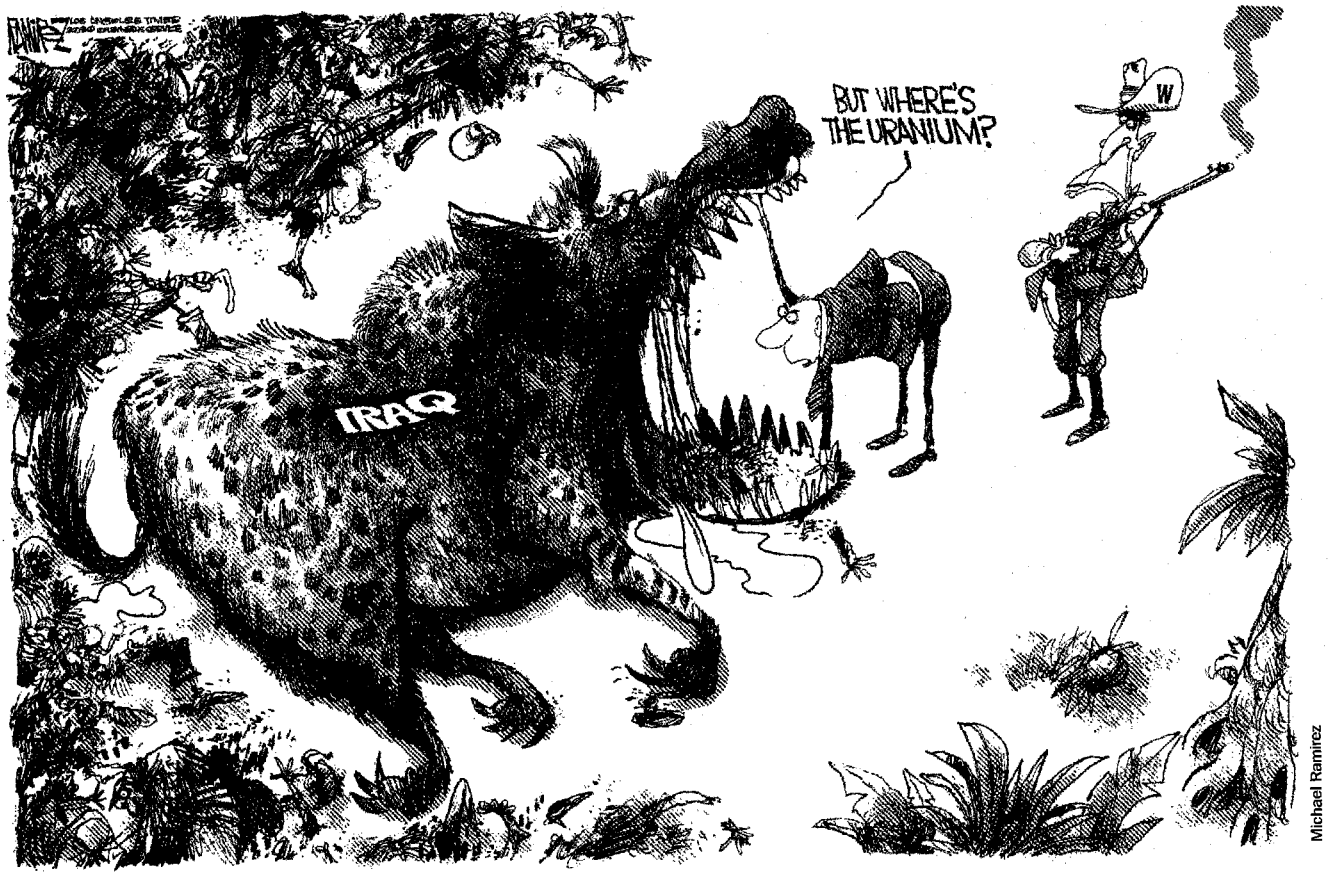
She ran for Congress 10 years later on the theme of "people, not politics," and won easily in her working class, big-labor district, becoming the first Republican woman from Pennsylvania to be elected to the House. "The people love her because she's got a lot of credibility. She's really passionate and she's not just going through the motions," says Mildred Webber, deputy chief of staff to Missouri's Roy Blunt, the House majority whip. "She's one of the folks, part of the community. She won by telling the story."

When Hart arrived in Washington, her politics turned heads. Her freshman year she was tapped by Blunt to join the Republican whip team. "She's so well-spoken," says Webber. "[Congressman Blunt] thinks so highly of her, all the members do."

When she isn't on the Hill, Hart tries to go home to her district as much as possible. She isn't married and doesn't have children, so during her visits she takes walking tours, often through the mills, plays golf, and cooks big meals for her family and friends.

Asked when she will have succeeded, Hart pauses and explains. "People don't have access to information they should get. I want people to be more aware of things like federal entitlements that need reforming and what kinds of policies create a healthy environment for entrepreneurs."

Hart says she doesn't see herself growing old in Congress. Although she says she doesn't have any immediate plans to change jobs, she wants to do something to "move the country forward. If that takes me somewhere besides the House, that's fine." ♦



Michael Ramirez

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The Phony Scandal

The Bush administration's mistake on uranium in Africa came in the July flap, not the January speech

By Fred Barnes

It was July 7, the Monday after the Fourth of July weekend, and chaos reigned at the White House. President Bush and his senior staff were frantically preparing to leave later in the day for a five-day trip to Africa. Ari Fleischer, beginning his final week as White House press secretary, answered reporters' questions in the morning in the West Wing briefing room. He was pressed about a 16-word sentence in Bush's State of the Union speech on January 28 that had cited efforts by Saddam Hussein to buy uranium in Africa for his nuclear weapons program. Fleischer botched the response. He gave a confusing and contradictory answer to whether the passage should have been included in the address.

First he said an alleged Iraqi purchase of uranium from Niger never happened. But that didn't undercut Bush's broader statement in the State of the Union: "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." Then Fleischer contradicted himself, saying "the president's statement was based on the predicate" of the unproven uranium deal with Niger, so the sentence was incorrect. Fleischer halted the briefing minutes later and promised to return with a "specific answer" on the issue. He never returned.

Late that evening, after Fleischer had departed with Bush and national security adviser Condoleezza Rice for Africa, a White House official told reporters the information on buying uranium was "not specific enough for us to be certain that attempts were in fact made." A second official said the claim, even attributed as it was to British intelligence, should not have been in the speech.

By conceding a mistake, the White House aimed to bring the matter to closure. Instead, a full-blown controversy erupted. In flinching, the White House aroused critics of Bush and the war with Iraq to a frenzy. Democrats charged the White House had cooked intelligence information and misled the American people about the urgency of going to war with Iraq. The Washington press corps was obsessed with the issue and peppered Bush and his aides with questions about it as they traveled from Senegal to Botswana to Nigeria. The White House was on the defensive. Bush's Africa tour was overshadowed by a credibility issue back home.

Before the Bush entourage left, there had been a debate in the White House over how to handle the issue. Many senior aides believed the State of the Union passage under attack should have been flatly defended. After all, it had the advantage of being true. British intelligence did say Iraq was seeking uranium in Africa. And the Central Intelligence Agency had some corroborating evidence—not particularly strong evidence, the CIA now says, but strong enough to have been cited in its classified National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) of October 2002. Still, one senior Bush official insisted the White House should yield on the point. The president went along. Since then, both Rice and CIA director George Tenet have stated the evidence of Iraq's activity in Africa was not sufficiently solid to warrant mention in the State of the Union. The president himself has never said so. Rather, he's defended the intelligence he gets as "darn good."

Within days of conceding an error was made, most of Bush's senior staff concluded they had made a mistake. No, it wasn't in mentioning Saddam's quest for uranium in the State of the Union in the first place. It was in making an admission of error about intelligence information. "We have nothing to apologize for," an official said. The concession was like blood in the water, attracting sharks, another official agreed. What the White House might have said on July 7 but didn't was something like this: "We have full confidence that British intelligence is correct in citing Iraq's effort to buy uranium. The British finding is supported by further intelligence of our own." No apology or

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backpedaling required. This might not have satisfied Democrats and the press, but it wouldn't have raised more questions than it answered, as the we-made-a-mistake tack did. It would probably have brought the issue to a quicker end.

Many of the myths generated by this flap have to do with the role of Vice President Dick Cheney. The initial White House interest in the African uranium issue came from Cheney. Early in 2002, he read in an intelligence document that Saddam might have purchased uranium in Niger or was seeking to. Cheney asked his daily CIA briefer to check into it. Several days later Cheney received a report saying indeed there was intelligence indicating the possibility of an Iraq-Niger transaction. But backup information was scant and not detailed, and the vice president did not pursue the matter.

Nonetheless, it was reported in the media and repeated by politicians that Cheney had asked the CIA to send someone to Niger to look into the matter. This is untrue. What did happen is that CIA officials, without the knowledge of Cheney or Tenet, dispatched a former ambassador, Joseph Wilson, to investigate. Columnist Robert Novak has reported that Wilson's wife, a CIA employee, recommended him for the job. Wilson traveled to Niger, interviewed current and former officials, and decided that no deal for uranium had been made with Iraq.

When Wilson returned, he gave an oral report to the CIA. But he didn't meet with Cheney or send him a written report on his trip. Cheney didn't learn of Wilson's trip until he read in the *New York Times* in May 2003 that an ex-ambassador had been sent. Cheney later received a document from an American diplomat who had debriefed Wilson. It was marked with a warning that the information might be unreliable. Leaders in Niger were not likely to admit to an American envoy that they'd violated United Nations sanctions by selling uranium to Saddam, it suggested.

A second myth about Cheney is that he insisted the sentence about Saddam's effort to buy uranium in Africa be included in the State of the Union. This was the buzz in the Washington press corps last week. It turns out Cheney played no part. Nor did another figure who's been fingered as the author, Robert Joseph of the National Security Council staff. The sentence was written by the president's speechwriters, who accumulated evidence about Saddam and weapons of mass destruction to strengthen the case against him. They used the NIE as their reference document.

Another Cheney myth is that his staff, along with NSC officials, wrote Secretary of State Colin Powell's presentation to the U.N. last February on Iraq's violations of sanctions. "The first draft" came from them, *U.S. News & World Report* said in June. Not quite. Cheney's chief of staff, Lewis (Scooter) Libby, assembled three separate "NSC/OVP [Office of the Vice President] working papers" on human rights, WMD, and terrorism for Powell, far more material than Powell needed. Powell used some of it, such as information about illegal missile tests and the presence of an Osama bin Laden lieutenant in Baghdad, but much of what Libby collected was left out. Powell's compelling presentation was put together by State Department speechwriters.

A final myth about Cheney was repeated last week by National Public Radio: that he told Tim Russert on *Meet the Press* last March 16 that Saddam had "reconstituted nuclear weapons." Yes, Cheney said that, but his aides immediately pointed out he was referring to Iraq's nuclear weapons *program*. And it was clear from other references in the same TV appearance that he meant Saddam's program for building nuclear weapons. The Bush administration has never claimed Saddam had actually produced a nuclear weapon, only that he was eagerly buying equipment and ingredients to do so.

The State of the Union, delivered a few days before Powell's speech, contained a half-dozen claims about WMD and Saddam. The last was the scarlet sentence about his quest for African uranium. The prior sentence noted that in the 1990s Saddam "had an advanced nuclear weapons development program, had a design for a nuclear weapon and was working on 5 different methods of enriching uranium for a bomb." Thus the foray into Africa could supply the required uranium.

There are two questions regarding the Africa sentence. One is how it got in the speech. The second is why the CIA, which had qualms about the veracity of the intelligence information, didn't demand it be stripped out. A somewhat similar sentence had been scratched at Tenet's insistence from a speech by Bush in Cincinnati last October in which he outlined the case against Saddam. But a senior administration official said last week the Cincinnati reference cited specific amounts of uranium and the State of the Union didn't. That, the official asserted, was a "critical difference." The more general reference in the State of the Union wasn't problematic, he said.

In the initial draft, the sentence read this way: "He has not explained his efforts to procure uranium in Africa or high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for uranium enrichment." That was changed when the speechwriters decided to mention Saddam and Africa as part of a string of things Bush would say "we know." Then the day before the speech was to be delivered, senior officials decided mere

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assertions wouldn't do. "Let's show how we know it," one aide said. So each of the examples of Saddam's husbanding of WMD was cited as the finding of some authority. In several cases, it was the U.N. In others, it was "our intelligence officials." In the case of uranium, it was "the British government," since the British had revealed Iraq's efforts in a dossier on Saddam published last September.

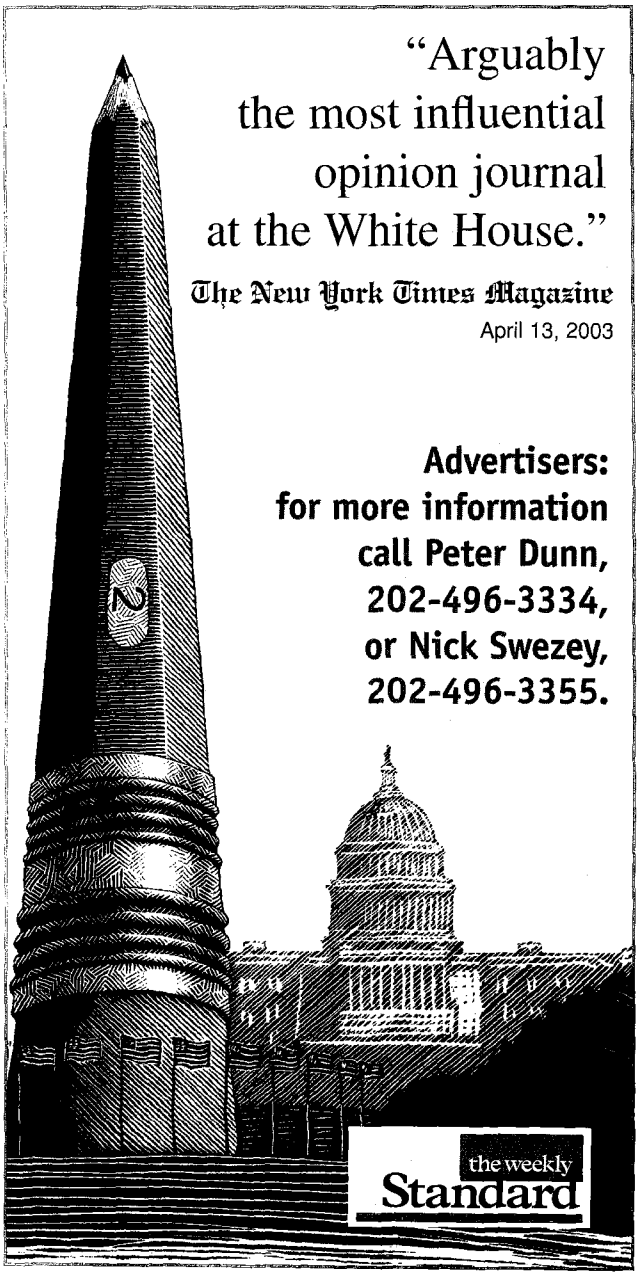
CIA officials now say the Africa information shouldn't have been used in any form. But when Robert Joseph, the NSC official, talked to a CIA liaison about this language, there was no objection. And there was no negotiation over the language, either, a White House official said. The liaison, Alan Foley, should have brought the matter to senior officials at the agency, a CIA spokesman said last week. If he had, they would have insisted it be cut out. And the White House would have complied. Absent that, should the White House have known of the CIA's doubts because of the Cincinnati speech? Not really. The CIA hadn't complained when Rice published an op-ed in the *New York Times* saying Iraq had not explained its "efforts to get uranium from abroad." That piece appeared the week before the State of the Union. Nor did the CIA warn Bush's speechwriters to be wary of the NIE's section on "uranium acquisition."

The furor over the 16-word sentence erupted only after Wilson, the ex-ambassador who'd gone to Niger, accused the White House of hyping evidence about Saddam's WMD. "Some of the intelligence related to Iraq's nuclear weapons program was twisted to exaggerate the Iraqi threat," he wrote in a *New York Times* op-ed on July 6. After his eight-day investigation, Wilson said it was "highly doubtful" that Niger had sold uranium to Iraq. Later, documents purporting to be connected to such a deal were proved to be bogus.

But the State of the Union never mentioned any supposed actual sale of uranium. No such sale was cited in any draft of the speech. None was referred to, even fleetingly, in Rice's article. So what was twisted? Wilson looked into the Niger case, but he had no grounds for accusing Bush of "selective use of intelligence." He hadn't examined the other evidence of Saddam's attempts to buy uranium in Africa. He didn't know the nature of the British intelligence Bush mentioned, if only because the Brits still haven't revealed it to the CIA, the White House, or anyone else. Wilson, by the way, is a fervent opponent of Bush and the war in Iraq. He's now advising congressional Democrats.

Finally, last week, the truth started to emerge. At his press conference with President Bush, Prime Minister Blair said, "In case people should think that the whole idea of a link between Iraq and Niger was some invention, in the 1980s we know for sure that Iraq purchased round about 270 tons of uranium from Niger." The White House, for its part, had had enough and started what it's calling a "counteroffensive."

The first step was to declassify and release the portion of the NIE entitled "Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction." Iraq, the intelligence document says, has been "vigorously trying to procure uranium ore" in Somalia and Congo as well as Niger. And there's more to come in the campaign for Bush's recovery. Congressional Republicans are joining the fight. The White House has brought back Mary Matalin, the Republican operative and ex-Cheney aide, to manage the media campaign. Maybe it will work. But the truth is, it shouldn't have been necessary at all. ♦



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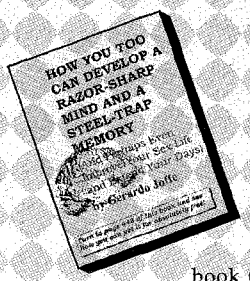

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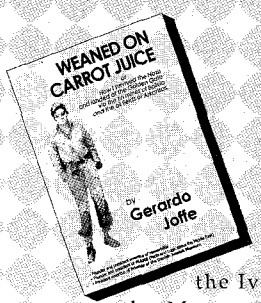

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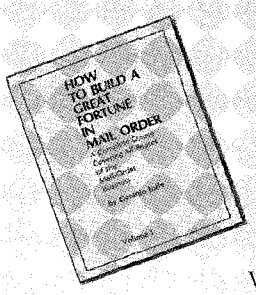

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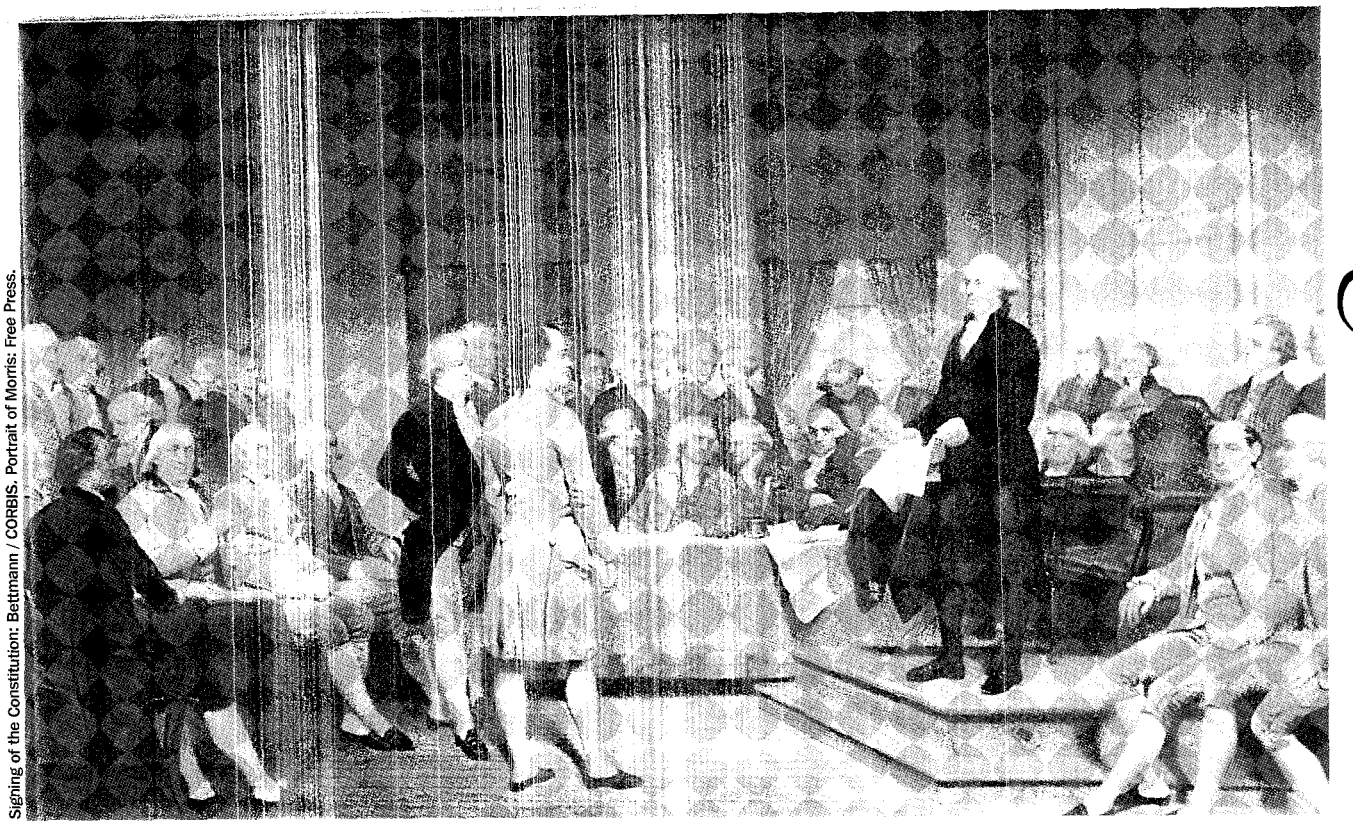

Signing of the Constitution: Bettmann / CORBIS. Portrait of Morris: Free Press.

Founding Rogue

Gouverneur Morris—the ladies' man who wrote the Constitution. By Noemie Emery

Think of the man least likely to have written the governing charter for a bourgeois republic born in rebellion, and you are apt to light upon Gouverneur Morris, the subject of *Gentleman Revolutionary*, fourth in Richard Brookhiser's series of books on the Founding Founders.

Interestingly, this is the Founder with whom Brookhiser has had the most fun—perhaps because Morris is such an odd duck among his fellow rebels: a blue-blood, a wit, an epicure, and a limping Lothario with a wooden leg. The descendant of two generations of colonial governors, he was born rich and grew richer: one of the rare Americans who wasn't a social climber, as there was no social class to which he could climb. Unlike his friends George Washington and Alexander Hamilton, he did not have to scheme and marry his way out of obscurity. Republican simplicity was not Morris's métier. "His determination to live in the style to which he had become accustomed could make his countrymen gape," Brookhiser observes. "Upon entering the inn," wrote a traveler who crossed his path,

Gentleman Revolutionary
Gouverneur Morris—The Rake Who Wrote the Constitution
by Richard Brookhiser
Free Press, 251 pp., $26

"I found Gouverneur Morris with two French valets, a French travelling companion, and his hair buckled up in about a hundred papillottes [paper curlers]. His wooden leg, papillottes, French attendants, and French conversation made his host . . . stare." A notorious rake until his marriage late in life, he was no ardent fan of conventional morals. The bride he chose was suspected of incest and murder.

All this makes Morris a fascinating figure but an unlikely rebel. He was the statesman as sybarite, a serious man who expressed himself lightly and who made time to enjoy himself hugely though caught up in dire events. He cared deeply about rights, wrongs, wars, and nations—but, at the same time, for food, wine, women, and good conversation. "He is fond of his ease, does his best to procure it, and enjoys it as much as possible," said one woman who knew him. "His imagination inclines to pleasantry, . . . being abundantly gifted in what the English call humor, united to what the French call *esprit*."

Perhaps that was his weapon against pain and darkness, of which he saw much. He watched his family divided by the revolution, French mobs tearing people to pieces, and his countrymen suffering at Valley Forge. As a boy of fourteen, he upset a kettle of boiling water and burned his right arm "fleshless." At twenty-eight, he caught his left leg in a carriage wheel and had it

Noemie Emery is a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard.

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amputated just under the knee. Morris never complained, turned the loss of leg into a subject for joking (much of it ribald), and wore his false leg like a fashion accessory. It was God's will, he believed, that we accept all the ills of providence with "sincere resignation"—and all the blessings of providence with sincere enjoyment. And so he did.

Morris served three years in the United States Senate and nearly three more as Washington's representative to France. But his real claim to history's notice lies in the twelve years between 1775, when he became a twenty-three-year-old member of the New York Provisional Congress, and 1787, when, as a thirty-five-year-old delegate to the Constitutional Convention, he shaped, edited, pruned, and essentially wrote the American Constitution, one of the greatest and most consequential political documents in human history.

Throughout these years, he was not merely a rebel involved in the war effort (largely by helping with financial arrangements). He was also a leading light in the small group—Washington, Hamilton, and his school friends John Jay, Rufus King, and Robert R. Livingston—who believed the colonies should be not only free but cohere as a nation. "A national spirit is the natural result of national existence," he wrote John Jay the year the war ended. "True it is that the general government wants energy, and equally true it is that this want will eventually be supplied."

Supplied it would be four years later. The Great Convention was Morris's moment, when, with Hamilton sulking and Washington silent, he carried the ball for his side. He was a fountain of words, wit, indignation, and eloquence, speaking, Brookhiser tells us, "173 times at the convention, more often than any other member, despite the fact that he missed all of June." He had an original take on the theme of class warfare, suggesting that rich and poor be segregated, "each in their own branch of Congress, so that their pride would encourage mutual distrust." And he made a tremendous and sadly forgotten assault on slavery, in which he not only condemned the "nefarious practice" but pointed out its corrosive effect on the country. "Travel through the whole continent, and you behold the prospect continually varying with the appearance and disappearance of slavery. . . . Proceed southwardly, and every step you take through the great region of slavery presents a desert increasing with the increasing proportion" of slaves. Slavery, he said, was "the curse of heaven" on the states that allowed it.

But his main concern was for the "dignity and splendor of the American empire," which needed only a forceful and unified government. "There were other nationalists at the convention," Brookhiser says. "None were as rhapsodic as Morris. He attacked every centrifugal or sectional force." It was this that would win him his great plum assignment: the composition of the final draft. That, and his rare gifts of style and sprightliness." His draft was done in four days.

Gouverneur Morris

Even Madison, commonly called the Father of the Constitution, wrote later, "A better choice could not have been made." Morris would give the early, unwieldy draft its final cohesion and power. Thickets were cleared to reveal clean thoughts and clean phrases. Alliterations and half-rhymes were used to good effect. And it was Morris who moved the source of the government's authority from "the states, in Congress assembled," to "We the People of the United States." Morris had dreamed of beholding "a race of Americans," and he did his best to create one.

With the American Revolution, Morris had seen a rebellion go well. With the French Revolution, he saw just how wrong one could go. When Washington became president on April 30, 1789, Morris had been five months in Paris, tending to business, spreading *esprit* in upper-class salons, and seducing aristocrats' wives. By July 14, the Bastille had fallen, and soon Morris would see his first political victim, "the head on a pike, the body dragged naked" by the mob through the streets. He described these things and more in his letters to Washington, and in February 1792 (filling a post vacant since Jefferson left it) he was nominated as America's representative to France. "The best picture I can give of the French nation is that of cattle before a thunderstorm," he wrote Washington. "We stand on a vast volcano, we feel it tremble, and we hear it roar."

The American Revolution was a war about rights waged by an educated middle-class populace. The French Revolution by contrast was the volcanic eruption of unlettered people held down for centuries by a frivolous upper class. The Paris mob was not like the farmers at Concord and Lexington, the Estates General were not like the Continental Congress, and Hamiltons and Madisons did not abound. Morris knew from the start that the two revolutions were different, and he looked for no good from the toxic mixture of a bone-headed king, clueless aristocrats, and an illiterate, desperate mob. As he was leaving France, he wrote the president: "I saw misery and affliction every day and all around without power to mitigate or means to relieve, and I felt myself degraded by communications I was forced into by the worst of mankind."

In December 1798, Morris at last came back to America, where he would observe the decline of the Federalist party and the deaths of too many friends. In December 1799, he delivered

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the eulogy for George Washington at St. Paul's Church in Manhattan. In July 1804, he sat by the deathbed of Alexander Hamilton. He served three years in the Senate, where he described the new national capital as "the very best city in the world for a *future* residence" and penned the line quoted in every book about Washington: "We want nothing here but houses, cellars, kitchens, . . . well-informed men, amiable women, and other little trifles of the kind." He refurbished his house, promoted the Erie Canal, and designed the plan for the streets of Manhattan. And he got married, at age fifty-seven, to one of the most intriguing women in his world.

Twenty-two years younger than Morris, Nancy Randolph had been born in 1774 into the very first of Virginia's great families. At age sixteen, she left home to live with her sister Judith, Judith's husband (and cousin) Richard Randolph, and Richard's brothers Theodorick and John. Nancy quickly won the affections of all three of the brothers and became engaged to Theodorick, who sickened and died. Soon after, the Randolphs' neighbors became intrigued by three different developments: Richard and Judith did not get along well, Richard and Nancy got along all too nicely, and Nancy appeared to be putting on weight. Gossip about Nancy's thickening waistline crested when the family went off on a trip to a neighbor's plantation in August 1792. There Nancy had a mysterious illness; soon after, the body of a newborn infant was found on the plantation by slaves.

Silent at the time, Nancy said later that she had borne a child, that it was born dead, and that its father had been Theodorick: "I had been betrothed to him, and considered him my husband in the presence of . . . God." Rumor assumed that the father was Richard, who was brought to trial some months later for murder of the infant. It was the mother of all celebrity trials, with Patrick Henry and John Marshall, the future chief justice, appearing for Richard Randolph—"the greatest defense team that has ever appeared in an American court," Brookhiser declares. Found innocent in the eyes of the law, but guilty enough in the eyes of the public, the Randolphs went home to their own tortured company. Richard died three years later, leaving Nancy to the mercies of his brother and wife. Not surprisingly, relations grew worse, and in 1805 Nancy, thirty-one years old and lacking resources, was turned out of what had been her home. When Morris met her three years later, she was living in a boarding house in what is now Greenwich Village.

This was the woman that Gouverneur Morris, the greatest catch of his age, a man who had seduced the most glittering women in the United States and Europe, decided to wed. Morris's idea of a courtship—or perhaps "try-out" might be a better description—was to offer Miss Randolph a job. In April 1809, thirty-four-year-old Nancy Randolph moved into his home as housekeeper. "I will love you as little as I can," he wrote her. There was also in their correspondence a delicate reference to her history: "I once heard, but have no distinct recollection, of events which brought distress into your family. Do not dwell on them now."

In early December, when he had made up his mind, he made discreet queries to Chief Justice Marshall and received a reply that was a model of discretion. Virginians had disagreed about the case, but circumstances were "ambiguous," and Judith Randolph, "who was the most injured by the fact if true," had let Nancy live under her roof for twelve years. On Christmas Day, after dinner, the pair were married in front of the fire to the disappointment and fury of Morris's nephews and nieces, who had looked forward to spending his money. They were more annoyed than ever four years later when Nancy, then thirty-eight, bore her sixty-one-year-old husband a son. By all accounts, the marriage was happy. And so was Morris, when he died four years later, survived by his wife, his son, Gouverneur II, and the Constitution of the United States. ♦

Bloody Utah

Brigham Young and the Mountain Meadows massacre.

BY BILL CROKE

In September 1857, a wagon train bound for California was attacked in southern Utah and 140 people were slaughtered, a few children the only—and purposely spared—survivors. This was the Fancher-Baker party, and their destruction is known in the American West as the "Mountain Meadows Massacre." Originally blamed on Paiute Indians, the atrocity is now understood to have been the work of a group of white Mormon settlers called "Danites." After many years of denial, the modern Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has accepted the fact that some of its members were involved. But the church still pins the blame on one renegade—John Doyle Lee—and vigorously rejects the culpability of the church itself and its president, Brigham Young.

American Massacre
The Tragedy at Mountain Meadows, September 1857
by Sally Denton
Knopf, 302 pp., $26.95

In *American Massacre: The Tragedy at Mountain Meadows, September 1857*, Sally Denton differs. The Mormon church came into being with the inspiration of Joseph Smith, a fourteen-year-old farmboy from Palmyra, New York, who in 1820 had a vision of an angel named Moroni who told him of the whereabouts of sacred golden plates buried in the ground. Smith transcribed these plates into the text of the

Bill Croke is a writer in Cody, Wyoming.

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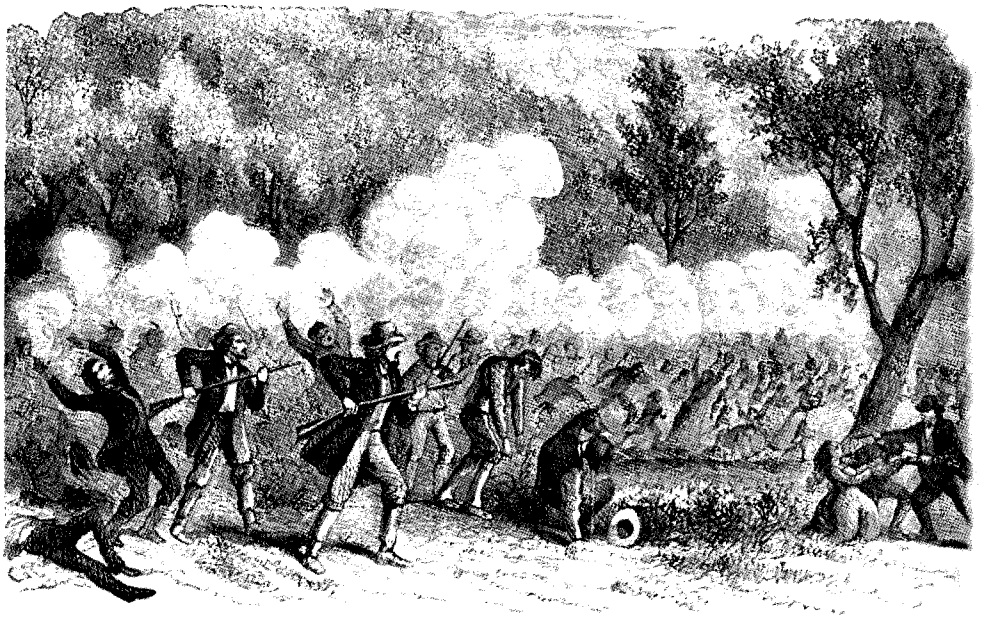

Knopf

A nineteenth-century engraving blaming the Mormons for the massacre.

Book of Mormon, a sort of version of the Old Testament.

From the start, the fast-growing sect suffered serious persecution and moved steadily west—from New York, to Ohio, to Illinois, to Missouri, and finally to Utah—to escape it. The Mormons also tried to counter the persecution by creating the Danites or Avenging Angels, Smith's personal bodyguard. Unfortunately, the Danites quickly grew into a quasi-secret police, numbering in the hundreds, who enforced theological dogma among the faithful and, argues Denton, practiced the doctrine of "blood atonement" (the ritual murder of apostates and "gentile" enemies by throat-slitting and beheading).

Smith was a controversial figure deeply involved in the manipulation of regional politics (the Mormons' numbers made them a demographic factor wherever they were), going so far as to threaten the federal government. When he was murdered by a mob in Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1844, the new prophet, Brigham Young, led the "Saints" west to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. What followed is best described as "the most successful socialist experiment in American history."

It was initially based on polygamy, which was mostly seen in the church's hierarchy. At the time of his death, Smith was the husband of forty-eight wives. Brigham Young at one point had twenty-seven wives. In the East, polygamy had been the main stimulus for persecution, with newspapers publishing lurid exposés of the graying husbands of multiple teenaged wives. Utah's admission as a state was delayed for many years primarily because of the polygamy question. The church itself outlawed it in 1890 and has since excommunicated anyone who practices it, though it is still seen in small fundamentalist Mormon sects in the Southwest.

From the beginning, there was concern that Brigham Young was intent on establishing a theocracy in the West. In 1857, President James Buchanan, tiring of the mostly nonviolent though constant abuse of federal officials in Utah, sent an army of 2,500 commanded by General Albert Sidney Johnston to install a new territorial governor and to institute martial law if necessary to subjugate the restive Mormons. The army failed to make it to Utah that year and went into winter quarters at nearby Fort Bridger in Wyoming. This caused much anti-federal hysteria in Utah, and the Mormons fortified the canyons leading to Salt Lake City. The Danites enforced "an LDS version of the Chinese Cultural Revolution" to keep the population loyal to Young.

Meanwhile, through the summer of 1857, the Fancher-Baker party was making its way west. Being dedicated entrepreneurs, the Mormons were usually enthusiastic resuppliers of gentile wagon trains in transit. But the volatile political climate kept the Fancher-Baker group shunned as it made its way from Salt Lake City south through isolated Mormon settlements, and the travelers faced the bleak prospect of crossing the deserts to California short of rations.

There has been much speculation as to why the wagon train was actually attacked. It may simply have been greed on Young's part, as the church was in desperate financial difficulties and the train was transporting a large quantity of gold bullion in strongboxes. In *American Massacre* Denton describes the scene after the massacre: "Wagons were now dismantled and featherbeds ripped open in search of gold; utensils, tools, and home furnishings that had been strewn about were collected. The plunder proceeded with a strange quiet."

Though scores were guilty, the entire blame for the Mountain Meadows Massacre eventually fell on John D. Lee, who was executed by a firing squad twenty years later, at the conclusion of a federal investigation and trial. Lee's defense in 1877 was that he was only following orders emanating from "the highest authority."

This much is known for certain: One of Young's subordinates, George A. Smith, passed on orders instructing Lee "to prepare the people for the bloody work." Denton posits that because of "Brigham Young's complete authoritarian control over his domain and his followers, it is inconceivable that a crime of this magnitude could have occurred without direct orders from him." A spiritually disillusioned Lee chose the firing squad as a repudiation of blood atonement. Brigham Young outlived him by only six months.

Lee's execution legally absolved Young and the Mormon church. In September 1999, the current president, Gordon B. Hinckley, presided over a memorial ceremony at the massacre site. He reiterated the church's official line of the last century and a half: "That which we have done here must never be construed as an acknowledgment on the part of the church of any complicity in the occurrences of that fateful day." After reading Sally Denton's *American Massacre*, you'll think the opposite. ♦

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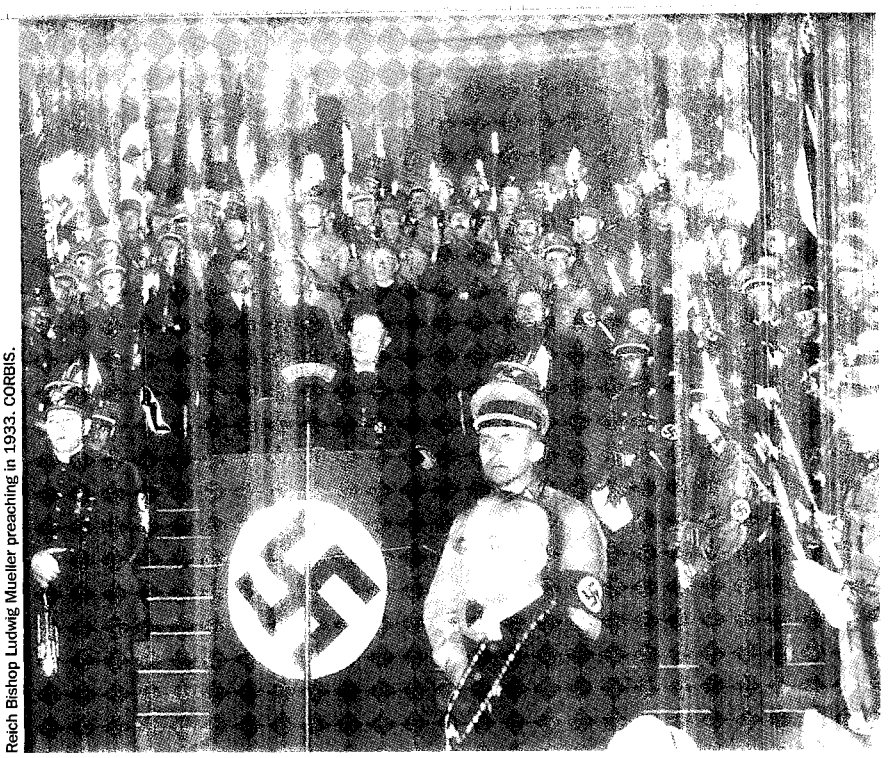

Reich Bishop Ludwig Mueller preaching in 1933. CORBIS.

Nazi Pulpits

The use and abuse of religion in Hitler's Germany.

BY JACK FISCHEL

Although scholarly books have dealt with the response of the Christian churches to National Socialism, surprisingly few have studied the Nazis' own attitudes towards Christianity. In *The Holy Reich*, Richard Steigmann-Gall challenges the conventional view that National Socialism was not only a pagan movement but was bent on eventually eliminating Christianity from Nazi-occupied Europe.

The Holy Reich
Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945
by Richard Steigmann-Gall
Cambridge University Press, 520 pp., $30

Steigmann-Gall acknowledges that some important Nazis, such as Martin Bormann and Heinrich Himmler, were profoundly anti-Christian and sought to restore the ancient religion of the pagan Germanic tribes. But many others, he argues, considered themselves Christians whose political movement was at least potentially compatible with Christianity. And these Nazis' effort to fit Christianity to Nazism was, Steigmann-Gall insists, condoned by many Protestant clergy in Germany who supported the so-called "Positive Christianity" movement, which called upon the Protestant churches to eliminate the Old Testament from the Christian canon and project an Aryan Jesus at war with the materialism of the Jews. Hitler himself claimed that the anti-Semitic legislation that culminated in the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 was consistent with Christian principle: "I recognize the representatives of this race as a pestilent for the state and the church and perhaps I am thereby doing Christianity a great service by pushing them out of the schools and public functions."

Although Hitler was baptized a Catholic, he eventually turned on the faith of his parents and presented himself as something of a Protestant until 1937, when out of frustration in his efforts to unify the Christian churches, he initiated a campaign of intimidation and terror to silence his clerical opposition. Deeply distrustful of the Catholic Church, he sought to counter its influence in Germany by creating a church that would transcend the rivalries of the religious denominations and would place loyalty to the Third Reich ahead of any other allegiance. At first he aimed to unite Protestants and Catholics. But once he realized that the Catholic Church was too great an obstacle to the Nazification of the churches, he sought to unite the Protestant churches as a bulwark against Catholicism.

Hitler's efforts to create a unified Protestant Church were stymied early on when the Reich Synod in April 1933 passed the "Aryan Paragraph," which demanded the removal of all Christian pastors with Jewish ancestry from their posts. In November the Reich Synod called for the removal of the Old Testament from the church canon.

These actions were opposed by the Catholic Church as well as by Protestant ministers from the German Evangelical churches who subsequently formed the *Bekennende Kirche* or "Confessing Church." Many of those who formed the church resistance to Hitler were themselves anti-Semitic. Martin Niemoller, for example, displayed little opposition to Nazi anti-Semitism and in 1935 told his congregation that Jews "bear the curse, and because they rejected the forgiveness, they drag with them as a fearsome burden the unforgiven blood-guilt of their fathers." As Steigmann-Gall informs us, until the outbreak of war in 1939, when Niemoller volunteered for military service from his prison cell, he made no sign of rejecting this position. In opposing the Aryan Paragraph as a precondition for the establishment of a German national church, dissident clergy, such as Niemoller and Otto Dibelius, took affront not because of the Nazi persecution of the Jews, but because National Socialism rejected the universal nature of Christianity which sought to convert the nonbeliever. The Aryan Paragraph, in effect, meant that baptism had no effect when it came to Jews.

Most Nazis who identified themselves as Christian were not interested in doctrinal questions, Steigmann-Gall

Jack Fischel is author of The Holocaust *and* Historical Dictionary of the Holocaust.

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writes. Rather, they focused on social issues and used biblical passages to reconstruct their image of Jesus and his social message. A large number of Nazis believed that they were following, if not Christian metaphysics, at least Christian ethics. In a speech defending National Socialism against the charge that it was a pagan movement, Josef Goebbels asked, "Is it paganist to mount a winter relief drive, thereby feeding millions of people? Is it paganist to give back to the *Volk* its inner freedom? . . . Is it paganist to restore the ethos of the family? . . . Is it paganist to erect a state upon moral principles, to expel Godlessness, to purify theater and film from the contamination of Jewish-liberal Marxism?"

Although Steigmann-Gall's *The Holy Reich* makes a persuasive argument that the "pagan" nature of National Socialism has been overstated, he is less plausible in convincing us that the Nazis were indeed following the tenets of Christianity. By eliminating the Old Testament from the biblical canon, reinventing Jesus as an Aryan, and depicting the struggles of Christ as the archetype of the eternal battle between the Aryan and the Semite—as well as rejecting the efficacy of baptism—the Nazis altered fundamental Christian doctrine.

One needs to ask Steigmann-Gall a series of questions. Do the Nazis' references to Christianity implicate Christianity in any serious way? Does the fact that many Protestant clergy supported National Socialism make National Socialism a Christian movement? Our own home grown neo-Nazi Aryan Nation also consider themselves Christian. Likewise the Ku Klux Klan in its heyday had the support of a great many Christian clergymen. Does this cause them, in fact, to be Christian? Before making the claim that most Nazis viewed themselves as followers of the gospel, Steigmann-Gall needs to undertake serious theological work to define what makes a Christian a Christian. His failure to do so leaves the reader to conclude that National Socialism was essentially a non-Christian movement that used Christianity to further its genocidal objectives. ♦

Art at Sea

New York's critics get it wrong.

BY THOMAS M. DISCH

Museum fatigue is a familiar experience even for the most ardent art lovers. Sometimes it is simply that the flesh is weak, particularly the feet. But even martyrs and marathoners are susceptible to aesthetic overload, a sense that there can be too much beauty, too many centuries. For a while the effort is exalting, but then it becomes stupefying. Enough already, one says, and surrenders to the cafeteria and the racks of postcards in the gift shop.

National Academy of Design

Those who share such frailty will be happy to hear that New York's most taxing art venue, the Metropolitan Museum, has improved its dining facilities as a capstone to its most imposing exhibition in recent memory: "Manet/Velasquez: The French Taste for Spanish Painting." That show has already closed, though a bit lingers on in a smaller exhibition, "Manet and the American Civil War: *The Battle of U.S.S.* Kearsarge *and C.S.S.* Alabama."

Seascapes, sad to say, were not Manet's strong point, especially at the time he painted this recreation of the 1864 battle off the coast of Cherbourg. Impressionism had not yet impinged on his own performance. When it did, a decade later, his seas brightened up and served him as a foil for figure studies, such as his splendid paintings from Argenteuil, one of which, *Boating*, has a permanent home at the Met. But he would never be another Turner and wisely did not often venture to take on the sea itself as his subject.

There is another problem with the painting of the sea battle (on loan from the Philadelphia Museum of Art), which has a wider relevance to the art of the nineteenth century. It represents the death knell for history painting, an area for which Manet's gift for painting larger than life figures better suited him.

A version of his Goyaesque *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian* from the Musuem of Fine Arts Boston appeared in the Manet/Velasquez show, but even though it's a much better painting than the oddly lifeless sea battle, it shares the same fatal liability as a record of an event: It isn't a photograph. For a record of the actual American Civil War you can't beat Mathew Brady. Photography has revolutionized how we think of war, both its glory and its grime. There is something incontrovertible in Brady's scenes of bodies strewn across a battlefield which would be unseemly if they were painted. (As for the duller sort of history paintings, dignitaries gathered about a large rosewood table, painters

Thomas M. Disch is a poet, novelist, and art critic.

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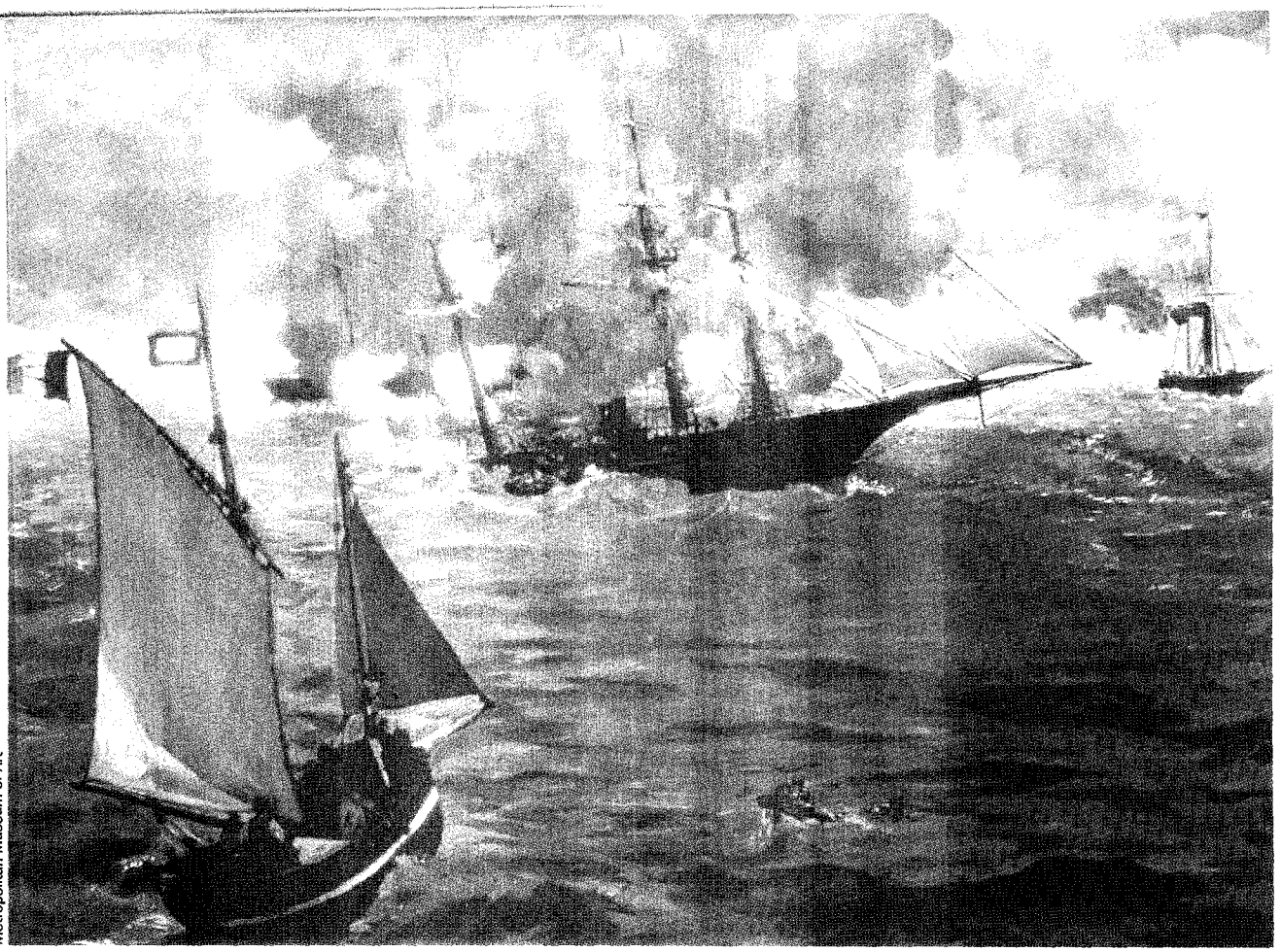


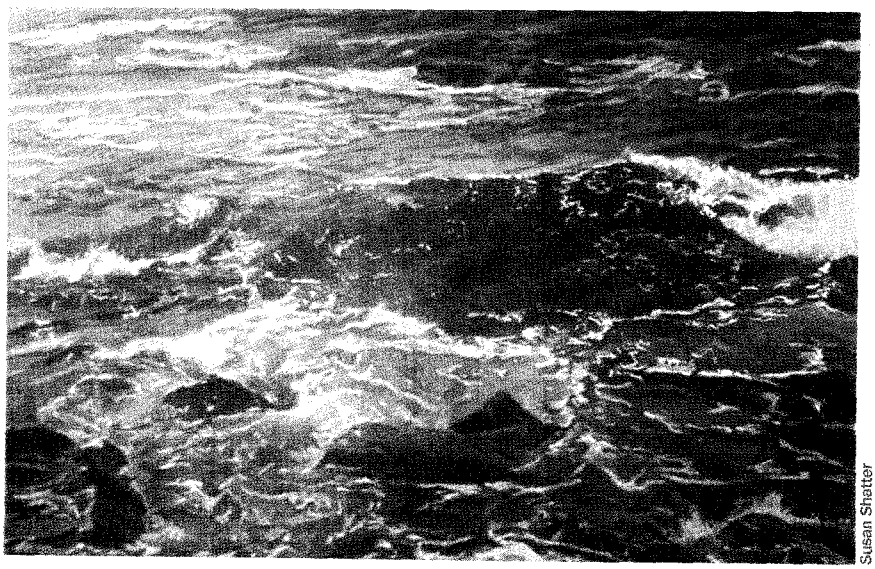
Metropolitan Museum of Art

Above: Edouard Manet, The Battle of the Kearsarge and C.S.S. Alabama. Previous page: George Lundeen's Field of Blue.

are happy to be quit of that part of the job description.)

What painters have been left with, in our post-Kodak age of infinite imagery, could be seen in nearly all its varieties at the recent, brief annual show at the National Academy of Design, when more than two hundred members exhibited their latest paintings and sculptures. Even with a one-per-artist limit it amounted to an ocean of art, and the academy is now so catholic in its tastes that all styles and trends except the most rebarbatively *je-m'en-fouiste* were represented, from landscapes and portraits that Manet himself would have approved (a large Wolf Kahn barn, a self-portrait by Michael Mazur) to snazzy abstractions in acrylic (Jules Olitski), granite (William Crovello), and ceramic (Dimitri Hadzi).

No single taste could encompass all the tendencies offered for view, but the impulse to stop and ponder, which is the touchstone of an anthology show, was high in proportion to the impulse to keep moving. But reviews in both the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker* dismissed the show with little more than a sniff and a sneer—and in both cases for reasons of a political rather than aesthetic character. The *Times* objected to George Lundeen's twenty-six-inch bronze *Field of Blue* as "old-fashioned academic kitsch," "amusingly retrograde," and "Norman Rockwell-esque." What so ruffled the *Times* reviewer's feathers was the statue of a boy, all bronze, cradling a folded flag in his arms, with only the flag and the boy's tie in color. The *Times* might have no objection to an exhibition devoted to the burning of the flag or its desecration in some other way but *this* was out of bounds.



Susan Shatter

Sea Swell *by Susan Shatter*

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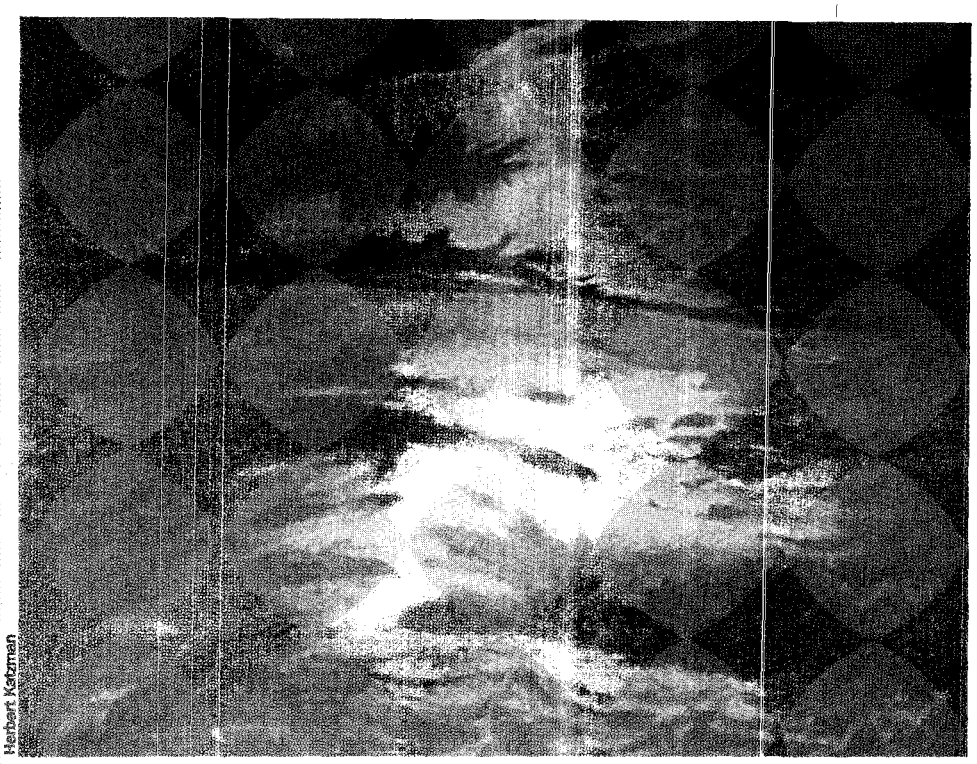
The *New Yorker* likewise found time to take offense at memorials that various artists made about the destruction of the World Trade Center. The reviewer presumably had in mind the woodcut digital print by Antonio Frasconi, *N.Y.C. 9/11/01*, which captures such elements as the twin towers' surviving steel lattice and has an overall look of Rauschenberg's illustrations for Dante. Not a blue-ribbon contender, but it did insist on a second, closer look. What did seem a clear winner was Herbert Katzman's *Glorious Sky, N.Y. Bay, 9/4/01*, a sunset of a crimson sky with clouds irradiated to gold by the setting sun in a palette at once morose and gaudy. The mood is certainly post-September 11, though the title date is a few days earlier. Impossible to know if this was one of the paintings that offended the *New Yorker*'s taste, and, if so, whether their disapprobation was extended to Joe Lasker's similar, although undated view of Norwalk at sunset across wide waters, which conveys an urbanely apocalyptic feeling.



Herbert Katzman

Glorious Sky, N.Y. Bay, 9/4/01 *by Herbert Katzman.*

Perhaps the most impressive seascape of the many in the show was *Sea Swell*, a watercolor by Susan Shatter of a close-up view near the shore, which captures those patterns of swirl, lift, froth, and translucency that have defied the eye-to-hand competence of even such a wizardly artist as Manet—until photography gave us all a perceptual edge. Painting water is one of the supreme challenges of representational painting, and there were enough canvases at the academy that met that challenge head-on to have made up a first-rate show all on their own.

It was galling to exit the academy's sparsely populated rooms and see, just down the block, a huge crowd in line outside the Guggenheim patiently waiting to get in to Matthew Barney's meretricious *Cremaster Cycle*—which has drawn the Guggenheim's greatest attendance ever, surpassing even the museum's motorcycle show of 1998. So, what else is new?

Around the corner from the National Academy at the Allan Stone Gallery on East 90th St. is a smaller exemplar of aesthetic overload: "Animals: A Century of Animal Paintings, Drawings and Sculptures from Tribal to Contemporary to Folk." If the National Academy Annual called to mind the packed-to-the-rafters abundance of the English Royal Academy shows of the nineteenth century, the effect of "Animals" is of a top-quality garage sale curated by Citizen Kane. This is the silly season, after all, and this arkload of iron roosters, wooden sharks, buffalo and eagle masks, totem poles, French pigs, and ceramic penguins is a mixed bag. Dip into this carnival of animals at random, transport your auk or gorilla home, and you will have a knockout piece of instant surrealism. But seen cheek by jowl in the same crowded cage they have the melancholy aspect of an underfunded zoo.

Even so, there is something primordial in any assembly of nature's ultimate others. I remember sharing a train ride once with an Italian priest returning from the mission fields of Africa. He was eager to show the trophies he was bringing home from the Kalahari, but when he unpacked his cardboard valise the horn of his wooden antelope had broken. He cried. Every home should have such a domestic totem, if only a ceramic kitten—whether it comes from Africa, Pier One, or the Allan Stone Gallery. Animals make us human. ♦

Allan Stone Gallery

A room of animals at the Allan Stone Gallery

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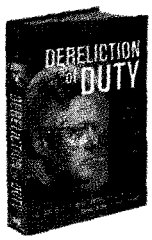

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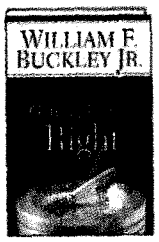

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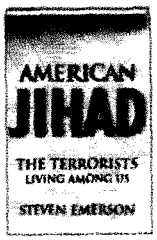

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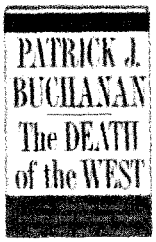

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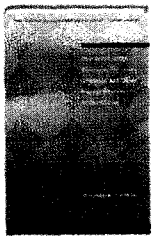

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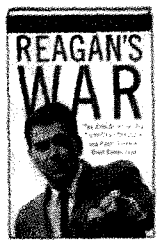

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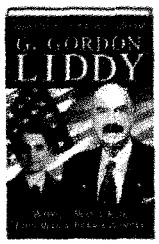

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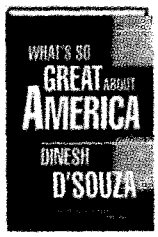

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The Standard Reader

"And they say dead men tell no tales!"

Books in Brief

***The Wandering Hill: Vol. II of the Berrybender Narratives* by Larry McMurtry (Simon & Schuster, 302 pp., $26).** The arrogantly absurd Lord Albany Berrybender, his equally eccentric family, and a corps of retainers again populate this second volume of Larry McMurtry's four-novel sequence. *Wandering Hill* continues their barely plausible venture from England to the primitive West in the 1830s.

McMurtry has ransacked the historical cast of the period, including Kit Carson, Jim Bridger, Tom Fitzgerald, the Sublette brothers, Toussaint Charbonneau, the husband of Sacagawea, and their son, Baptiste or "Pomp," born on the Lewis and Clark expedition. From the gentleman-adventurers of the Old World, he has plucked William Drummond Stewart and Prince Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied. All of these, plus artist George Catlin and several dozen Indians are dragged into the narrative.

The story relates the improbable marriage of the utterly unsocialized Jim Snow (the *Sin Killer* of the first volume's title) and the uninhibited Lady Tasmin Berrybender. The "Wandering Hill" is from an Indian legend of a migrating hill populated by devils, an encounter with which usually signifies death. The Berrybenders *et al.* are wintering at a remote trading post. There's a good deal of gab, mountain-man reminiscences, and frequent he-ing and she-ing—a routine carnality seems to be the author's conception of the naturalism of those days—to further McMurtry's often-expressed intent of demythologizing the westering experience. The priapic Lord Berrybender sets an exhausting cadence.

This is less a novel than a literary romp. It has its moments: The buffalo stampede is as vividly drawn as one would expect from the author. But the characters are cartoonish and the dialogue stilted. Even admirers of McMurtry may find the yarn to be like some Western rivers: too thick to drink, too thin to plow.

—Woody West

***Tales from the Left Coast: True Stories of Hollywood Stars and Their Outrageous Politics* by James Hirsen (Crown Forum, 314 pp., $25.95).** Whether they want to cure a rare disease, take away Americans' guns, or save the chickens, left-wing advocacy groups love the support they get from entertainment celebrities. In *Tales from the Left Coast*, keyboard-player-turned-law-professor James Hirsen offers a catalogue of Hollywood idiocy. (Hirsen may not have done all the writing himself: *NewsMax.com*, a conservative news site where Hirsen writes a column, is credited as the co-author, whatever that means.)

From stories of Alec Baldwin's animal advocacy to Oliver Stone's Castro toadying, Hirsen provides ammunition for those who see Hollywood as a wretched hive of leftist villainy. And he's right that many entertainers, with their half-informed agitation for dubious causes, have proven their political stupidity. But Hirsen doesn't know where to stop. While it's useful to attack suicidal pacifists, cocaine snorters who campaign against nicotine cigarettes, and smut peddlers who coddle puritanical Communist dictators, Hirsen can't admit that politically active left-wing celebrities ever have a point. Julia Roberts's work on behalf of girls with Rhett syndrome and Bono's tireless, wonkish advocacy on third-world debt get treated with the same offhand disdain as Michael Moore's inane prattling.

Hirsen's writing—with its exclamation marks, rhetorical questions, and anonymous sources—also leaves a lot to be desired. The book offers no logical chain of argument or suggestions for improving matters. For a supposed insider, furthermore, Hirsen has precious little dirt to dish: Almost nothing in this book will come as news to anyone who reads a newspaper. The idea behind *Tales from the Left Coast* is worthwhile. The book isn't.

—Eli Lehrer

***Diversity in America: Keeping Government at a Safe Distance* by Peter H. Schuck (Belknap, 444 pp., $35).** Casting a critical eye over American society, Yale law professor Peter Schuck makes the case that government and the law are mortal enemies of true diversity. Diversity of all types—from

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religious to racial to culinary—runs rampant, but the focus of post-1960s "official" diversification on race and ethnicity threatens to wipe out not just such principles as equal treatment, but also naturally occurring types of diversity. Schuck offers the example of affirmative action. An attempt to diversify a university faculty by race or gender will likely compromise political and ideological diversity.

On immigration policy, lawmakers have compromised the national interest for diversity's sake. Though Congress did the right thing in 1965 by rewriting immigration law to be more welcoming to those not of European heritage, clarifications after that year deserve less than high praise. In the 1980s, Congress began developing a "diversity visa" lottery, which it has since expanded, to allow those adversely impacted by the 1965 law opportunities for entry. One claim to notoriety the diversity lottery has under its belt is allowing in the Egyptian terrorist who killed two people at the Los Angeles airport last year.

Schuck recommends the program be scrapped, its 50,000 visas distributed each year among those on traditional immigration paths involving family ties or job skills: "No convincing conception of justice demands . . . that this precious asset should simply be given away at random and without reference to any benefits for American society." The idea of merit is involved when the average person rejects the notion that government should thirst after specific kinds of diversity.

"In short," Schuck concludes, "diversity's value to people depends on its perceived genuineness and lack of legal contrivance. This in turn depends on where it came from, how it came about, and the process that produced it."

—Beth Henary

Book of the Week

Our Beerbohm

Joseph Epstein's fabulous small stories. BY J. BOTTUM

***Fabulous Small Jews* by Joseph Epstein (Houghton Mifflin, 340 pp., $24).** In literature, as in baseball, an era of long-ball hitters—or would-be long-ball hitters, swinging for the fences on every pitch—doesn't know how to appreciate elegance in the game. Have you ever seen Adam Dunn standing at the plate? Or read the *Paris Review*? This season, Dunn has hit 25 home runs for the Cincinnati Reds, while costing them 100 strikeouts and a .203 batting average. And the *Paris Review*—well, they're not publishing Joseph Epstein's fiction.

A contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, Epstein is best known for his personal and familiar essays, which is a little like saying Babe Ruth is best known for his sports career. When Epstein writes the kind of essays collected in the 1999 *Narcissus Leaves the Pool*, or last year's bestselling book-length essay *Snobbery*, or this fall's forthcoming volume *Envy* (in a series of slim volumes on the seven deadly sins), he makes you forget that anyone else ever played the game. I'd cheerfully sacrifice, if not quite my mother, then at least one or two of my aunts on the altar of the gods of style, if that's what it took to write with his combination of learning, comic self-observation, and—the inevitable word when speaking of Epstein—*elegance*. You imagine Max Beerbohm would be like this, if Beerbohm happened to have been a midwestern American with a deep knowledge of Chicago's sports teams, Chicago's streets, and Chicago's Jews.

But there are observations writers want to make—places that writing wants to go—that the essay simply doesn't accommodate, and for some years Joseph Epstein has been publishing short stories in *Commentary* and the *Hudson Review*. The recent ones have now been collected in a volume called *Fabulous Small Jews*. The title is from a poem of Karl Shapiro's, but there's something about it that seems to demand pronouncing the first word *FAH-bulous*—if only because Epstein aims, in story after story, at capturing the fabulous character of small Jewish characters. It's not exactly that his characters have necessarily lived small lives, but the stories show them in small slices, precisely observed.

That's sometimes a little cruel. "Postcards," for instance, is a comic story of a man who writes pseudonymous letters of insult to famous authors and finally gets caught by a woman novelist. But a brief mention, toward the end, of Hefferman's having straightened up his apartment, before he met the woman—on the off-chance he "might even get lucky"—reminds the reader a little of George Bernard Shaw's claim that H.G. Wells observed his characters in the same appreciative spirit that a butcher eyes a pig.

But that kind of cruel precision is one of the places the essay doesn't want to go. A kind of wry wisdom about human foibles, too, is more properly the province of fiction than nonfiction prose. With stories in *Fabulous Small Jews* like (my two favorites) "Artie Glick in a Family Way" and "The Master's Ring," Joseph Epstein has brought to fiction his trademark learning, wit, and, yes, elegance. ♦

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Joint Press Conference

July 17, 2003
Prime Minister Tony Blair, United Kingdom
President George W. Bush, United States

Question: How long do you expect opposition in Iraq to continue?

Blair: Public life, as you know, is a marriage of power and trust. He who would trespass against his duty, who would sleep upon his watch, forsakes the faith of those in whose name he serves and risks sundering the very fabric of civilization itself. Thus we must persevere in our efforts in Iraq, for so long as the enemies of liberty presume to challenge our good order. In this we must neither flag nor falter.

Bush: Well. They're bad guys. I know that. I mean in Iraq . . . our enemies. I just say, you know, bring 'em on. We'll take care of 'em. We're there. We're going to be there. I take responsibility for that.

Question: From what you have observed so far, do you feel the Iraqi people are ready for democracy?

Blair: Through a wise and salutory nurturing of the enterprising spirit that resides in each human breast, the people of Iraq will be inspired to take up their own cause, to build upon the wisdom of their inheritance an edifice so mighty and so sure as to enhance each of their common pursuits, to realize the full measure of each individual will, and by happy confluence to multiply the products of their labour and weave a life so abundant and so glorious as to put into the shade the scarcity and deprivation of their former forsakenness.

Bush: Yeah . . . well . . . I agree with that. What he said. So long as taxes are low. I mean it's their money. They ought to keep it. And as for the oil, you may recall in 1991 the oil prices were high and then they came down, so that should take care of that.

Question: Prime Minister Blair alluded to the Kyoto global warming treaty in his speech. Are there frictions between your two governments on that issue?

Blair: I think it was Burke who observed that by adverting to the dignity of our high callings, our ancestors had turned a savage wilderness into a glorious realm; and in that same spirit we can, as we nurture our environment, neither neglect, ignore, nor deprive the people of the just enhancement of the material splendor of their quotidian lives. A pleasing synthesis of the pristine and the privileged has always been the joint aspiration of our two governments.

Bush: You trying to take away my car? I mean, hell, no. Global warming is, you know, something, but down on the ranch, I've got my truck. And so we're ready to look at exploration and, you know, some people think I shouldn't drive because it would be some special virtue. But I don't buy that.

Blair: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your patience and forbearance.

Bush: Bye.

the weekly Standard
July 28, 2003

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[illegible] Bad Results

Robert Zelnick is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and chairman of the Department of Journalism at Boston University.

[illegible] the Equal [illegible] permits state [illegible] sities to use race as one [illegible] their admissions criteria.

As an [illegible] denounce our selective institutions purporting to serve students by admitting those whose academic qualifications fall far short of the majority and who predictably wind up in the bottom quarter of their class.

As a citizen, I am appalled when "diversity" quickly translates into de facto segregation at student living facilities, campus gathering places, even graduation ceremonies. I oppose *Law Review* places allocated by race rather than by grades or research skills. I share with John McWhorter of the University of California a sense of horror at the mind-sets—victimization, self-separation, and anti-intellectualism—we are producing among the intended beneficiaries of race preferences.

All that said, I was not totally displeased by the Supreme Court decision permitting the University of Michigan to admit a "critical mass" of minority students. My reasons are threefold: California, Texas, and Florida. I have seen the future and it does not work. Let me explain.

Through referendum, judicial decree, or executive order, each of these jurisdictions was compelled to abandon race-conscious university admissions. At each state's most selective institutions, the first result was a sharp decline in the number of entering minorities. Particularly in California, the predicted process of "cascading" occurred, as students with less-impressive academic credentials found a better match at less-competitive institutions.

In educational terms, this is not a bad result. The discarded systems had employed naked discrimination to inflate the numbers of minority students. [illegible] minorities had been stigmatized as inferior students. They had flocked to less-demanding majors. Disproportionately, they had left school before graduation. With those problems abated, society could turn to the essential task of improving minority education in grades K–12, eventually enabling them to return to the elite schools in robust numbers and as equals in every respect.

But what seemed logical proved politically untenable. The most vocal political communities and their academic allies demanded that the old racial balances be restored. Overnight, the test of the new system became how quickly it could be made to mirror the old one.

Texas guaranteed university places to anyone graduating in the top 10 percent of her or his high school class. Florida tried race-conscious scholarships. UCLA Law School offered admission preferences to students electing to study Critical Race Theory. Cal-Berkeley threatened to abandon the SATs.

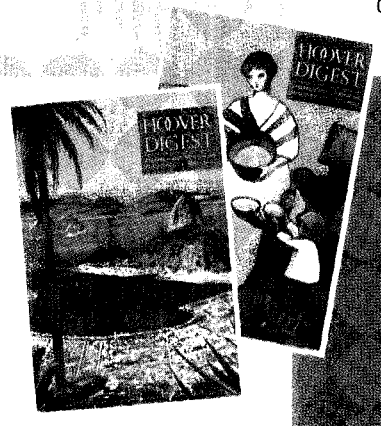
Minority enrollment rebounded dramatically, as would have happened at Michigan, too, despite the law school complaint that race-blind standards would cut minority enrollment from 14.5 to just 4.0 percent. But the **new schemes were far riskier to quality education than the old system of preferences, which at least identified the most qualified students of each race.**

Eventually foes of race preferences would have faced a Hobson's choice: Accept the new practices. Battle the new evasions in the courts, case by controversial case. Or turn the issue into a bruising national political battle—mobilizing majority support against the minorities.

Against those choices, even a bad Supreme Court decision is to be preferred.

—Robert Zelnick

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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A tradition of operating in the public trust.

Telephone service, a public trust

An Advertisement of the
American Telephone and Telegraph Company

The widespread ownership of the Bell Telephone System places an obligation on its management to guard the savings of its hundreds of thousands of stockholders.

Its responsibility for so large a part of the country's telephone service imposes an obligation that the service shall always be adequate, dependable and satisfactory to the user.

The only sound policy that will meet those obligations is to continue to furnish the best specific service at the lowest cost consistent with financial safety.

There is deep in the Bell System no incentive to earn speculative or large profits. Earnings must be sufficient to assure the best possible service and the financial integrity of the business. Anything in excess of these requirements goes toward exceeding the service or keeping down the rates.

This is fundamental in the policy of the company.

The Bell System's ideal is the same as that of the public it serves: the most telephone service and the best, at the least cost to the user. It accepts its responsibility for a nation-wide telephone service as a public trust.

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July, 1928

The greatest phone system in the world started with a contract between a phone company and a nation.

AT&T was allowed to build and operate an integrated national telephone network. In return, AT&T held it in the public trust and managed it for the good of the entire nation. AT&T's mandate was to continuously improve the technology and make sure it was distributed universally – affordable and accessible to every American.

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The nation's phone system was built as a public trust – it's time for the Bell companies to work to restore it.

America deserves nothing less.

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